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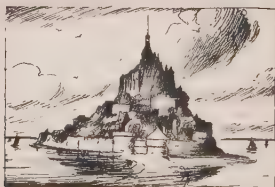
EDITION

OF

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY



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DRAWINGS BY WALTER JACK DUNCAN

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

ESSAYS—III

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DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
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ESSAYS—III

ESSAYS

PRÉCIS OF A JOURNEY

I

IT IS supposed that the things really important will somehow fix themselves in the gelatine of memory; that there is no need to take notes at the time because the true charm or significance will develop best by their own subconscious radiation. And indeed that notion is comfortable to the indolent, for it is almost impossible when travelling to sit down calmly and make inquest of one's mind. Yet there were some episodes I wish I had seized in a rough draft. I should like, now, to be more certain as to exactly what (if anything) I thought about them. (One of the delights of travelling is that one thinks so little.) If I had made a note, I could see them again more clearly; and with the vision before me I could now think about them better.

For instance the warm evening when we slipped down into the Second Cabin to join the dancing

there. I dare say it is true in most alcoves of society, as it so often is on board ship, that while the First Cabin passengers have more deck space the Second have more fun. There were not enough of us in the First, that voyage, for the really rowdy kind of fun that I most enjoy; but in the Second they were having it *con brio*. There, in a way to restore your faith in the rollicking capacities of humanity, you see plump pursers and their agile assistants dancing off the manifests of the day, most admirable rotarians. And there I saw the Irish girl who causes me pang for not having made a memorandum. I could have done it then and there without embarrassing her, she was so unconsciously moving in an artery of life. She was enjoying herself. I had hoped that our voyage to Ireland might give me at least one glimpse of a leprechaun; well, here she was, and I saw nothing more thrilling except perhaps an iceberg opal in afternoon, and the Northern Lights beyond Cape Race.

I haven't described her, and that is my anxiety. For now, two months later, she has almost vanished (as leprechauns do). She was smallish and darkish, and a bit greenish in her gaze; supple in the waist; airily active on a pair of well-planned shanks. Her hair, intended to be curly, was too nearly a frizzle by reason of some excessive toasting and cropping. But in the humidity of North Atlantic dancing some of its softness came back to

it. Her dress, both Elsie and I agreed (and Elsie knows a good deal about dresses) was, for her, just exactly right. There was a kind of gilded mosquito netting over a skirt of vigorous but uncostly—well, I would have called it chintz; but when I think about it, it was less opaque than chintz. It was rather short and flared out a bit round the haunches. Now you will say I am sentimentalizing, but there was truly an enchanting pathos about that dress for it effected such violent brave gaiety with such cheap materials.

And it is not only a dress that is important, it is what emerges from a dress. Something emerged that seemed very important. It was her elbow. She danced, like all natural and talented dancers, mostly in silence, but that white elbow spoke for her. It was held jauntily outward, even tilted a little above horizontal; it was poised as delicately as a butterfly's wing, satisfied and provoking. There was something about that elbow that would reassure you as to the fine flavour of life. There was swagger in it. None in the First Cabin would have dared dance with an ulna cocked so debonairly. Something like that, I dare say, the leprechauns of Antrim might stand akimbo under a whin bush to watch foreigners go by. Even her partner, whom I can't remember at all, he has vanished from the earth entirely so far as I'm concerned, even her partner must have been awed by the elbow; for

when I first saw him he was holding his hand edge-ways at her back, in the genteelest fashion. Later on, though, I was pleased to observe, his large palm was spread out properly, as an enthusiast's should be. Good heavens, a woman needs a little coöperation when she's dancing, doesn't she?

Now I can see that because I'm writing this more or less consciously for print I tend to become jocular—the universal way to evade attempting the truth about anything. And the odd fact is that it no longer seems to me worth while to take the trouble of writing at all unless you try to say what you really feel. So don't let me get jocular about that sudden flash of perception. Already it has begun to fade, but in that hour it had its certainty. In the warm crowded lounge, which rolled gently to and fro, we followed the elbow round and round. When we came back from a small brandy in the adjoining smokeroom, she was taking part in some sort of Irish jig. What is there about those old rustic capers that makes one aware, This is what life was meant for?

It probably wouldn't have helped, after all, if I had tried to catch her exact profile and bearing in an immediate memorandum. She would still have been just as elusive. She was the problem of every art; to make you feel, amid the racket and thrill of life itself, the adorable pang of the irreproducible instant. In that innocent perspiring throng she

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moved exultant, proud of her flimsy fineries, proud of the warmth in her veins, testimonial to this genial world, a small triumphant Now. Unconsciously she cried out to the artist, that old deceiving cry of every beauteous thing: *Here am I, and there is something in me that you and you only can understand.*

I looked for her again, that bright early morning when we débarked into the tender *Cynthia* for Londonderry. Was that she, that commonplace little figure in the machine-made suit and horridly shiny slippers too much strapped and scalloped, standing by the companionway and two gossoons clinging—to her elbow? I could not be sure, but it may have been.

I must be forgiven for putting down these inquirendoes haphazard and as they recur. I am embarrassed to realize that strong-minded travellers usually return with definite pronouncements about literature, politics, or international finance. When friendly Ship News asked me suddenly, in the very moment when Titania and I were gazing fiercely along the pier for our first glimpse of Urchin and Urchiness, what had been important in our trip, I could think of nothing except that I had been able to distinguish, blindfold, a 1911 Chambertin from a 1911 Musigny. That, though it is a test of discrimination analogously valuable to a literary taster (could you tell a Zane Grey from a Curwood

if the volume were not labelled?) you will say is unimportant. But you must be patient. I believe that some curious speculations will emerge. I shall tell you of my great discovery in Westminster Abbey, for instance. But mark you: I have no theory to depose and no sagacious conclusions to offer. The strong-minded traveller, I gather, goes abroad to comment on what he sees. I prefer to let what I see comment on me. All these strange scenes, these other people with their so different ways of doing things, have they come any nearer than I to the great human satisfactions? And if so, what can I do about it? That, if he is honest, is what the traveller asks himself.

Customs vary greatly among different ships. Some I know where towards midnight a polite, even regretful, but quite definite master-at-arms makes the round remarking gravely "Ladies must be off the deck." In some other vessels, they tell me, passengers may err all night long provided no hullabaloo is committed. The Chief Officer has described to me how, looking down from the bridge in the soft mid-summer dawn, he sees engrossed couples leaning together over the forward rail. Their heads are together and they palaver their sweet prolixities, quite Off Soundings. (What can remain to be said after all these hours?) But the hazy suffusion spreads and rises round them, and their comfortable darkness is gone. They realize

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the day and chase hurriedly to their berths. And the man on the bridge continues his vigil, tolerant and serenely amused.

II

It surprises me that so few Americans take the comfortable and uncrowded route to Northern Ireland for a spring holiday. Ourselves (we were four) were the only passengers getting off at Moville merely to pursue the picturesque. Unlike arrival in England or France there is no special train waiting for you and all manner of calculated exploitation. You get into the tender *Cynthia*, where practically all others are homing Irish who tell you they haven't been back for thirty years; and you steam gently up lovely Lough Foyle for a couple of hours. That sort of approach gives you a happy sense of spaciousness. Green slopes of Ireland, waterside garden privacies, gorse-bright knolls and blue remoteness are already part of your mood when you reach Derry in the warm forenoon just as the children in white stockings are on their way to church. The town is at ease in Sunday morning hush, it had no idea you were coming. Two old women with black shawls over their heads, two idlers smoking on the pier bollards, these (beside the porters and agents who are there of necessity) are all who think it worth while to attend. *Cynthia* slides gently past the wharves and you read the signs on warehouses

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with that eager attention given to the shabbiest random affiche on strange soil.

The little Metropole Hotel, a cheerful commercial house, is just round the corner from the quay, and we walked there in a strong blaze of sun. A tiny Irish maid in black uniform and bobbed hair was shyly waiting at the door to escort us upstairs. She gave me my first suspicion, confirmed afterward by further observation, that the legend of Irish comeliness is not just legend. Never have I seen so many strangely beautiful girls, beautiful with a touch of queer feyness, like their countryside. Tom and I, though inordinately weary, set off for the preliminary stroll without which one cannot be at ease in new scenes. The very first thing you see in Derry is posters of O. Henry (quite naturally they print it O'Henry) comedies at the cinema. The lure of the West, begun by the movies, is followed up by the Anchor-Donaldson Line suggestion: "To Canada for £3 to Approved Settlers." We loitered on the Foyle bridge watching the children trooping back from Sunday school. It was odd, in that peacefulness, to see them bustling regardlessly by two legends painted large on the rampart—"The spirit of 1688-90 is still as strong as ever" and "No peace this side the grave for the murderers." Such ejaculations are often to be found scrawled on walls and boardings in Irish storm centres; yet I think one must

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not take them too seriously now, for the outstanding impression I had was that bitterness has very greatly subsided and that the Irish have settled down to work. We were struck by the rather gruesome coat of arms of Londonderry, cast in the iron gunwale of the bridge: a very discouraged looking skeleton sitting wearily outside a fortress; a memory, no doubt, of the famous siege.

A columnist would indeed be derelict who did not pause long enough in Derry to see St. Columb's cathedral; though a late breakfast and a nap were our chief needs. And by mid-afternoon you can be far out in the mountains of Donegal, among primroses, skylarks and cuckoos. I am not mentioning the name of the salmon-fishing inn near Lough Swilly where we spent our first night. If it became too well-known it would lose its perfect flavour of Somerville and Ross. That evening (it was early June) the birds sang until eleven o'clock, and were at it again soon after three. In the whitewashed village street (in some respects more like a French village than an English) we picked up what we thought at first must be a fairy horse-shoe, a tiny curve of iron, rusted and worn thin. We supposed it to be a shoe cast by one of their innumerable miniature donkeys; but it proved to be a thrifty heel-plate from a youngster's boot. Anyhow we kept it as souvenir. So is the commonest unregarded jetsam of one civilization trove and talis-

man for the stranger. It is not necessarily the stained glass and the rare wine that one is looking for abroad. Do I call for champagne as soon as I get aboard ship? Not so: almost any banker on the North Shore of Long Island can give you that surcharged and overrated fluid. I order gin-and- ginger-beer.

In Derry we had been promised (in a voice of extreme concession) "a Buick touring car." But the vehicle, when it quavered to the Metropole, proved to be one of the most ancient of Henry's stepchildren. Our elderly driver asserted that the Buick (evidently a well-known chariot in the town) had been suddenly and unexpectedly commandeered by the Bishop of Derry: an explanation so charming, whether true or false, that we acquiesced instantly. The old Ford taxi, though abrasive to the knees for a party of four, was admirable for our purpose. The very informal Irish Free State customs post, camped in a shack a few miles out of Derry, gave us no difficulty. Not far from Letterkenny a happy puncture stranded us some time by the way, and there was silence to hear larks and watch a tumbling brook. Had we had nothing else but that Sunday afternoon ride to Milford our voyage would have been worth while: the great spread of hill and valley, the white road between spiky hawthorns, the country girls bicycling with fluttered skirts. What miseries of

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homesickness they must suffer for that exquisite landscape when they go to work in New York or Philadelphia—or are movies and ice cream sodas sufficient anodyne? And so I have a suggestion to any time-scanted kinsprout who wants a vacation in which he will see none of the things that the Miss Spences know all about but plenty that will do the heart good. Let him get aboard an Anchor Line ship, get off at Moville, and take the same ship back again when she stops at Moville on her return voyage. He will have a week to explore Donegal or Antrim, where he will be imbedded in loveliness like a comma living in one of Moira O'Neill's poems. He will hear the cuckoo holding up its tuning fork to the unheard melodies of earth. He will learn what a peat bog looks like; see the green light eddy in those surfy limestone sheers near Dunluce; observe Nature at her uproariously intricate scheming in the Giant's Causeway. If you ever supposed that she works just haphazard, the Causeway will disprove it to you. She has a plan of campaign all thought out, just as carefully as Nicholas Murray Butler. Five-sided polygons evidently have something to do with it; but you can sit on those basalt pedestals (she has concaved some of them just exactly to the sedentary norm) and figure it out. "The meanin' of it is," the battered guide kept beginning, but I'm afraid we gave him a sore shock. We were the only people

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causewaying, and he was looking forward to a grand old spiel. "How much is it worth to you to let us see this alone?" I said to him. He looked at us bewildered, a stricken brightness in his eyes. We gave him half a crown to leave us, and he went off congested with his automatic rigmarole. It was brutal, yet necessary if we were to have peace in that stunning wilderness of solid geometry. As I suggested to Tom, who is a professional lecturer of huge renown, Suppose you went to Notre Dame University for your annual affair; and they met you at the train and said "Here's your check but we'd rather not have the lecture."

One of the quaintnesses of the Causeway, at any rate after a wet night, is the great number of snails going about their tranquil business. One of these, we reckoned by taking cross-bearings on his progress, would just be under an overhanging boulder about the time it was ready to fall. So we removed him several yards; though this troubled Tom who said we had set the earnest cochlea at least a hundred years back in his schedule.

III

One purpose of this journey was to settle, in the most æsthetic and philosophical manner, an ancient dispute between Madrigal and myself on the relative merits of Scotch and Irish whiskeys. So it

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is that any account of the adventure at the bridge of Glen Dun must begin at the Refreshment Room of the railway station at Coleraine.

Our host at Milford had given us some valuable pointers on the three most famous Irish distillations—Power's, Jameson's, and Bushmills. To me, Bushmills had always been a name of bright tradition. Madrigal, I think, was inclined to vote for Jameson. But our adviser had rather led us to believe that in Ireland itself Power now holds the palm. (I would not have you interpret these differences too bitterly: one does not make comparisons among goddesses, nor choose a favourite of the three divine Graces.) See us, therefore, when changing trains at Coleraine with half an hour to wait, buying a bottle of Power as laboratory material. The young woman at the Refreshment Bar we imagined a lineal descendant of Kitty in the old ballad. ("When beautiful Kitty one morning was tripping with a pitcher of milk to the fair at Coleraine.") The bottle, duly wrapped, was entrusted to Madrigal's care. It went with us on the tram past the village of Bushmills itself, where we saw the home of that rival fluid wistful in the distance. That wet and chill evening at the Giant's Causeway it came forth once or twice from its parcel for gentlemanly inspection, so that I was well familiar with the shape and size of the package.

The next morning, in blinks of changing sunshine and shadow, we drove along the Antrim shore. Outpost cliffs of Scotland lay on the horizon, the light changed and rippled on the Irish hills, on the steep granites of Fair Head. In Ballycastle it was market day, we saw pigs bigger and pinker than it had ever occurred to us to imagine. If swine should ever again want a Gadarene setting in which to rush down a steep place into the sea, Ballycastle is their place. Then we turned off across the peat bogs. That morning is not forgotten. It was too excellent for speech. We sat, tightly compressed in Dan Daly's smart little car, silenced with air and contentment. Then, after those miles of moorland, where the fresh peats are neatly turned up like slabs of chocolate, we dipped into a sudden ravine. There were birch trees, a braying of rooks, and an elfin valley widening to the sea. This was our first glimpse of the glens of Antrim. Down there the village of Cushendun where Moira O'Neill lives. (We imagined we spotted her very house, a white mansy-looking home among trees.) Moira O'Neill, whose Songs of the Glens we had loved so long and most of which Madrigal knows by heart. This was a moment, our instincts told us, for commemoration.

It was high noon; the sun was well over the foreyard, if we took even the tallest of Antrim's mountains for reckoning. We pulled up on the

stone bridge, gazing down where the stream hurries. It was one of those collaborations of place and destiny when it is best not to speak one's intentions, but to allow natural good instinct to express itself. I was afoot beside the bulwark of the bridge. I could see Madrigal, sitting tightly wedged in the back seat, rummaging in his pocket. The familiar package emerged. He sat holding it, I stood contemplating him. This, for him even more than for me, was a millennial moment. I wondered what word of Irish magic would be uttered. I myself had only some vague feeling that gratitude should be uttered to the singer of the glens. She would never know that we had paused to look toward her home, had drunk her honour, and had passed on. But so often we know nothing of the nicest things that happen to us. Thus we all hung, pivoted on a crystal pinpoint of eternity, in that nooning sun. The rooks creaked in the treetops, birches and hazels quivered in blue light, the stream glittered in amber sluice.

"Don't you think we ought to do something about Moira?" said Madrigal, looking at me with something quick, bright, even fanatical in his handsome gray eyes.

"I sure do," I said, with my eye on the parcel.

"Well, here's to her!" he cried.

My heart stood still, then leaped against its usually solid moorings. It is a fact; then for per-

haps the only time, I felt that smothered spring of the cardiac muscles when the heart gathers itself to jump like a frog. For there, floating past my palsied arm, passing in slow curve, falling a hundred feet to the glen below, was the precious parcel. Our bottle, our laboratory bottle, our bottle (practically full, I remembered) of John Power and Sons, ten years old. Of course Moira O'Neill is a great poet, but I hadn't intended to *sacrifice* the bottle to her, only to drink it in her honour. I gazed in horror over the parapet. Madrigal's mercurial mind, I supposed, had been ungeared by this great moment. But there, thank God, lay the parcel safe on a little sandy shelf beside the brook. It had not broken.

I could not speak at first, and I still shuddered, for native impulse had almost carried me over the bulwark in attempt to seize the falling treasure. Yet in a way I admired my friend. Truly this was a notorious gesture. Not I, not I, would have done it. As my blood resumed its pedestrian march I admired him more than ever before. He had made a sacrifice worth while. For how many years had we dreamed of our voyage to Ireland; of the first bottle of Irish whiskey shared on its own sod. I turned to him, aghast, perhaps, but still with an unwilling homage breaking through. After all, the inn at Cushendall was only a mile away. . . .

"Come on then, let's drink it," he said. He

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was pouring from a different bottle. He had divided the Power into two smaller flasks for convenience of transport. The package for which my heart had leapt was empty.

"Here's to Moira!" he said. "The Power and the Glory."

That afternoon we walked down Glen Arriff in sudden spangles of sun. We stumbled down the ravine among ferns, bluebells, rhododendrons, and a wheen of flowers and mosses dripping like sponges. In midsummer, I dare say, it is a bit picnicky, but in early June you have it to your lane. There are little falls, and quick iced-tea-coloured water in pots and cascades. Below one of the falls is a moist log cabin with coloured panes of glass through which you can see the bright curtain of water in queerly melodramatic tints. There is a little tea-barracks below the Glen, where a young woman showed us shamrock growing under a hedge. "And now," she said, with the air of one who had often been spoofed but who was still anxious to get at the truth, "Is Niagara really any bigger than Glen Arriff?"

IV

The other day I received a charming letter from K. B., of Waterville, Maine, written on the stationery of the Royal Hibernian Hotel, Dublin. It began: "I have the honour of being the first

to tell you that in Dublin there is a 'Dean Swift Taxi Service.' By it I was carried to this excellent hotel, thinking the while of your Long Island wanderings with 'Letters to Stella' in the pocket of your own 'Dean Swift.' I assume you have never been in Ireland. . . ."

And at the date K. B. wrote her friendly letter we had only lately left Dublin. This suggests how often in life one must inure one's self to being reproached for NOT doing the very thing one is that moment engaged upon.

Before coming to Dublin, though, it would be unseemly not to say a word about Belfast. Here we encounter another theme of wide human application, viz. the gay variousness of personal impression. Madrigal and I, travelling side by side and encountering the same experiences, were sure to be struck by quite different phases. For me, one interesting moment was the large shipyards, and an item in the *Northern Whig* that a new United Fruit Company steamer was to be built there. That pleased me, as those handsome white vessels are a familiar sight from this New York window where I write. Madrigal, however, is more likely to remember the excessive number of Presbyterian parsons we saw in the streets. These, I think, somewhat troubled him, as in their sable gear he could not distinguish them from genuine Papists.

There is still a gorgeously Dickensy flavour

about any "commercial" hotel in a provincial city of the British Isles. At the Imperial in Belfast you find it at its most pleasing. To sit in the Writing Room, pretending to read your *Northern Whig* but really watching the busy drummers compiling their business of the day; or to sit on a tall stool at the little circular bar in the lounge and hear them chaffing the handsome barmaid; or to see them at breakfast in the Commercial Room—this is to partake an aroma of life as distinctly British as a Liggett Drugstore is American. I thought that the barmaids of the Imperial had just the right touch of hotsy-totsy in their manner toward their clients, though I did not venture to use this phrase. It was at Erskine Mayne's excellent bookshop in Belfast that I made my first careful investigation as to what American writers are most highly esteemed by the British trade. Corroborated by further study in Dublin and London I can give you my list without fear of inaccuracy. I venture to say that in any lively bookshop in those islands you will find most of the following displayed in the window (I set down the names in no special order):

Emerson Hough
 Kathleen Norris
 Zane Grey
 Jack London
 C. A. Seltzer

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Grace Richmond
Hulbert Footner
Joseph Lincoln
L. M. Montgomery
Achmed Abdullah
B. M. Bower
G. W. Ogden
J. W. Schultz
Eleanor H. Porter
J. O. Curwood

The Royal Hibernian, justly praised by K. B., looked just a little too swank for us. We went—and I am glad to pay grateful thanks to Mr. Ernest Boyd for the suggestion—to the delightful Standard Hotel. We had not been there long before I understood why it is frequented by Mr. Boyd and other men of letters. As befits a Standard Hotel its bookcases, in the Writing Room, are thoroughly equipped with standard literature. Dublin is eminently an intellectual city, and nowhere else in the world have I found a hotel equipped with the Koran, Virgil, Pindar, Cicero, Herodotus, Don Quixote, Shakespeare, Ruskin, Gibbon, and even my old flame, Kirke White. There was also “Chimes from a Jester’s Bells” by R. J. Burdette.

I find in the Black Notebook, or Domesday Book as Madrigal called it (I was bursar on this voyage, and had to keep honourable item against a

future reckoning), the insidious memorandum *Debit Madrigal 2 naggins*. This may have been a gesture of courtesy on my friend's part, to atone for the shock I had suffered at the Bridge of Glen Dun. I wonder if K. B. knows what a naggin is? It was the proprietor of O'Farrelly's Grafton Bar who introduced us to it. It is a very tiny bottle that holds two whiskey glasses. Two glasses = one naggin, four naggins = one pint. We had gone to Dublin fortified with many kind suggestions from Doctor Canby and others as to literary people we should pay our respect to. And therefore it is humiliating to have to record that O'Farrelly's Grafton Bar and a certain sewer emptying into the Liffey were our chosen ports of call. I say this, I am aware, subject to misapprehension by the shallow; but to sit in a clean bar-room and hear the liberty of unlicensed thinking is one way to draw near the pulse of a strange country. Moreover those five noble casks behind the counter suggested to us an excellent ballad in five staves—one stave for each barrel. They were lettered as follows: FINE OLD PALE SHERRY, SANDEMAN'S OLD PORT, FINEST OLD JAMAICA RUM, JOHN POWER & SONS 10 YR. OLD, J. J. & SONS 10 YR. OLD.

As for the sewer, the explanation is easy. There is a place where a large drainage pipe of some sort empties into the river, and a good deal of harmless

refuse comes down. This is a place of congregation for seagulls who watch alertly for congenial scraps. Leaning over the river-wall you can see them hovering just below you, almost within reach of a hand. I have never had so perfect an opportunity to study those beautiful creatures. I wish I had the ornithophile pen of a Hudson to make you see them and forget the humbly candid scene. The exquisite silky wings, fringed with black; the pearly light shining through their tail-feathers, the quick shifting gaze bright with calculus and latent suspicion—such suspicion as every conscious creature secretly feels toward every other sharer in the enigma of life. Here was poetry indeed, poetry worthy of a city rich with a thousand strange intimations of temperament. Nor were these glorious gulls entirely unlike the fierce wigged lawyers whom we saw in Dublin Castle, swooping and picking at a poor little man in the dock. There, where a rather ragged Free State flag flies over the tower, the old state apartments are turned into courtrooms painted with the harp, and quaint charwomen cook their tea in the viceregal boudoirs. They look out on the grassy graves of six British officers buried in the back garden of the Castle. That, as every tactful Irishman tells you, not wishing to offend any possible sensibilities, was “in the Troublesome Times.”

But I don't want K. B.—or Doctor Canby either—

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to imagine that our days in Dublin had no specifically "literary" thrill. Madrigal and I did not actually ride in any of the Dean Swift taxis, but we gazed admiringly at the garage, near St. Patrick's Cathedral, where they are housed. In the Cathedral itself, tucked away at the back, is an old discarded pulpit. It was Swift's, the verger said; and I expressed some surprise that it wasn't still used. I should have thought that one of the chief prides of officiating at St. Patrick's would be to stand in the very punctuation of the great harpooneer. But no, said the verger, and with entire gravity—"It's not big enough for the preachers nowadays."—Is Swift's epitaph too well-known to be repeated here? I copied it down for you—

HIC DEPOSITUM EST CORPUS
JONATHAN SWIFT S.T.D.
HJUS ECCLESIAE CATHEDRALIS DECAN
UBI SAEVA INDIGNATIO
ULTERIUS
COR LACERARE NEQUIT
ABI VIATOR
ET IMITARE SI POTERIS
STRENUUM PRO VIRILI
LIBERTATIS VINDICATOREM

Ah, the lovely scorn in the *Abi Viator* and in the *Si Poteris*!

Most of the books will tell you that Swift and

ESSAYS

Stella were buried side by side. It is not quite true. There are at least two fathoms between them.

V

Perhaps the habit of writing on windowpanes with diamonds has gone out. But if one had a diamond, what would one write with it? It was François Premier (wasn't it?) who scratched the glass at Chambord with his laborious

SOUVENT FEMME VARIE
BIEN FOL EST QUI S'Y FIE

whereas Philippe Pot, that old Burgundian warrior of the fifteenth century, if left alone with any glazieri, incised a prettier and briefer epigram of his lady—TANT L VAUT. Oliver Goldsmith, on the glass of his window at Trinity College, Dublin, merely put his name and the date. *O. Goldsmith, March 1746*, you can see the broken fragment in the beautiful library at T. C. D. But you won't have much tranquillity to ponder it, for the garrulous attendant will be excessive on the manuscript of the Book of Kells. However, by attending him singly while the other prowled thoughtfully about, Madrigal and I managed to see some of the charms undistracted.

With pride the verger's bosom swells
And endlessly he tells and tells
The story of the Book of Kells.

PRÉCIS OF A JOURNEY

I want to weave my own small spells,
Evoke my private heavens and hells
And sniff the fragrant calfskin smells
And dip my beezers in these wells
Of Irish Undefined—

He tells

The story of the Book of Kells.

What I was wondering was how Oliver, the poor young student, got hold of a diamond.

It was delightful to loiter a while about the courts of T. C. D., to watch the boys in gowns and sand-coloured bags, the humorous-faced coeds, the frequent bicycles. A notice posted at the lodge took me quite into the Oxford feeling of thirteen years ago—*Senior Sophisters are reminded that before they can sit for the B. A. Exam. the fee must be paid to the Junior Bursar.* But there is more an air of alertness, less an air of picturesque luxury, than at Oxford. In some queer way you get the feeling that a larger proportion of these students are making sacrifices for their schooling, and that they have a living to earn. The undergraduate magazine, called *T. C. D.*, is as agreeably young as journals of that sort always are. Reading it I learned that the College Historical Society had lately debated the thesis "That the English Empire has seen its best days." The motion was lost. A literary society of the women students had read a paper on T. S. Eliot. "In respect of Mr. Eliot's

poetry Miss FitzHenry said that, like most of the younger generation of American writers, he has been strongly influenced by his French contemporaries. She considered that his work marks an epoch in the development of American poetry. The meeting adjourned for tea."

To one who wearies of the waste and idle display in New York, who grins a little ruefully at the Peaches Browning and Rudolph Valentino phases of our era, there is a heartening sense of frugality in Dublin life. The most luxurious car that I saw was a Dodge sedan. The Abbey Players were not in action so we went one evening to the Gaiety to see an American mystery play—"In the Next Room," by Eleanor Robson and Harriet Ford. It was a quite worthy piece but the most interesting thing to observe was the faces in the audience. You see it again in the portraits in the Irish National Gallery. What is it in the Irish face that so oddly strikes the observer from New York? Is it the absence of certain Mediterranean and Levantine types that are part of our daily panorama here? My mind keeps coming back to the word *frugal*, I don't just know why. There seemed something sensitive, quaint, obstinate, and simple in those profiles as one watched them watching the stage. Comments of this sort are futile and vain, but there was a very real feeling that this middle-class audience (none in evening dress) had not been

spoiled by any pseudo-sophistications. I couldn't help thinking that it would have loved "Abie's Irish Rose"; and indeed it has its Mutt and Jeff in a Dublin newspaper every evening, buys its odds and ends at Woolworth's. One of the selections played by the orchestra was "Waters of the Perkiomen," and Madrigal and I wondered if anyone else in the house knew where that creek is. An almost equal surprise was to find Sargent's portrait of Woodrow Wilson in the gallery on Merrion Square.

I don't know just what Terenure is—the name of some suburb, I suppose. But most of the trams we saw carried that name, and one afternoon Madrigal and I rode out in that direction, then descended for a walk in a blow of rain. We admired a provocatively handsome young woman striding along with an Airedale terrier, quite regardless of the wet; but you soon give up noticing admirable women in Dublin, there are too many of them. We sheltered a while in a pub, and then found ourselves by the Milltown golf course where a solitary player was finishing his round in the wet. Madrigal, an enthusiastic golfer, was anxious to prove the quality of Irish turf, so we climbed up on the links and Madrigal begged permission to drive a couple of balls. The member, a young medical student, was delightfully hospitable. Fortunately Madrigal's drive was a beauty, in

spite of a bumpy gale. "It's easy to see he knows the game," said the medico. We adjourned to the clubhouse, and presently our host, due at his hospital, insisted on driving us back to town in his Dodge. In the course of that chat he told us quite seriously that he had heard that in Chicago hotel-doors were always made with a little loophole, so that you could look out before opening to make sure it wasn't a gunman. We denied this, but I think he still believes it so.

I do not think that Dublin gives up her secrets easily to the casual visitor, and I shall always be suspicious of those who summarize her in quick, sparkling vein. Trying to feel one's way toward the truth is often a dull and patient business. I confess that she gave me no easy clue to her temperament—as one notices in Paris, for instance, in the constant scream of bus-brakes. (Is it not thoroughly Parisian to be travelling too fast and then have to halt hastily?) It was surprising to one from New York, where buildings crash down and leap up again in a few months, to find the wreckage of her Troublesome Times only just now beginning to be repaired. Americans also will be amazed to find marked on thermometers that 55 to 65 degrees is Healthy Indoor Temperature. But there can be no question as to her charm. Wandering round Merrion Square or in St. Stephen's Green at dusk you may sometimes think

PRÉCIS OF A JOURNEY

you have come within guessing distance of her troubled magic. But if so you'll not spoil it by trying to put it prematurely into speech.

When you get aboard the steamer at Kingstown (or Dun Laoghaire, pronounced Dunleary, as they write it now) on a bright breezy morning you'll find the swift little vessel lined with gulls. They sit along the lifeboats as though they were members of the crew. Thirteen of them flew with us all the way to Holyhead, more than sixty miles. I watched them carefully, they soared apparently without effort, keeping to windward and a little aft of us. The mail packet, speeding more than 20 knots with the characteristic ringing chime of turbine engines, never outsped their easy glide. (If a big transatlantic liner had a baby, it would be just like one of those trim cross-channel racers.) The gulls followed us; as far as I could see they never flapped their wings at all except when occasionally one would fall behind to investigate some jetsam. They appear to be merely lovely, but what a sharp eye they have for scraps.

And so I thought what a pretty and poetical bit one could write about those mysterious Irish gulls, their easy irresponsible grace, their bright fanatical eyes. One might pretend to see in them some symbol of the Irish soul. But it would only be a purple passage, and anyone without conscience can pull a purple passage. What I really thought

about those gulls, as the hill of Howth went dark behind us, was that they were too beautiful for words. And so they were.

VI

One of the world's greatest publicity men made a certain disaster on the Irish Sea famous as long as our language may endure. Perhaps that unenviable renown spurred the Irish Channel service into its modern comfort and efficiency. Though it is nothing new, for as long ago as old Jules Verne (see *Around the World in 80 Days*) the Irish mail packets were esteemed for grace and speed. Yet it would almost have been worth while to be naufraged on the Irish Sea, like Edward King in 1637, if one could be sure to have a *Lycidas* written about it. So I was thinking as the trim little *Scotia* swung round Holyhead in the breezy blue. Yet it would be a pity to have missed that train ride along the Cymric shore. To buy your *Times* at an English railway stall—even if you only smell it, and don't read it; I always choose British journalisms by the smell; how do they get that excellently fragrant paper?—and then settle down in one of their heavenly dining cars, admiring at your elbow the little holder specially built for your bottle of Bass—I wish you nothing worse some June meridian. I always have a look at the engine, to see its name. (It was the *Lord Rath-*

more.) I am always hoping to find one called *Sir Kenelm Digby*, and to see again the *Charles Lamb* that I once admired at Crewe. Though English friends insist that it was probably named for some divisional superintendent of the L. M. S.

The English like to believe that we, more than anyone, are ridden by our advertisers, but I have seen in both Paris and London papers the palm of the business office outstretched in a way that would seem queer in a reputable American journal. *Palma non sine pulvere* is the idea, obviously. It always strikes me as odd to find, in descriptions of gowns worn by ladies presented at Court, the names and addresses of the modistes. Yet perhaps it is just as reasonable as printing the name of the publisher in the review of a book. This is the kind of thing that I mean:

MRS N—— H——. A gown of cyclamen georgette embroidered with diamanté. A train of velvet brocade in a deeper shade of cyclamen, lined with silver and held at the shoulders with jewelled straps. A fan of shaded ostrich feathers. (Maison Alexander, 11, Conduit-street.)

Some of the ladies at that Presentation must have been plump, for the *Times* remarked that "the following gowns worn at their Majesties' Court were unavoidably held over, owing to pressure on space." How much more entertaining

if, instead of a mere inventory of the dresses, a little social précis were given of each lady, annotating the various qualifications (of charm, heredity, or stratagem) which brought her to make her curtsy. But it does not do to let the mind linger on philosophical possibilities.

Everyone who has walked in Westminster Abbey knows the stone in the floor marked O RARE BEN IOHNSON. But what not everyone realizes is that this is not the original stone, which was moved to the wall near by when it began to show signs of wear. And if you will study Ben's original stone a new thought may come to you about this most famous ejaculation of tenderness. The O and the RARE, in the original slab, are so spaced that it is hard to know whether they were meant as one word or two. Was the Jack Young (who had the inscription cut) a punster? Did he intend a play upon words? Or did the stonecutter misunderstand? Certainly a play upon words would have been much in the sentiment of the seventeenth century. So I suggest that the well-loved epitaph may have been intended as ORARE BEN IOHNSON—Pray for Ben Jonson (a use of the infinitive frequent in taphology). If the stonemason misspelled Jonson's name he may also have misunderstood the Latin word. His accident, if accident it was, has made us all richer these three centuries. This suggestion is my one contribution

to seventeenth century scholarship, and I have a huge secret pride in it. I have explored the "Jonson Allusion-Book" (Bradley and Adams, Yale Univ. Press, 1922) to see whether the adjective *rare* was frequently applied to Ben: I don't find it, except in Herrick's "Hesperides" (1648). John Aubrey's "Brief Lives," that gorgeous "Who's Who" of the time, is our best source of information. Aubrey merely says:

He lies buried in the north aisle in the path of square stone (the rest is lozenge), opposite to the scutcheon of Robertus de Ros, with this inscription only on him, in a pavement square, of blew marble, about 14 inches square,

O RARE BENN IOHNSON

which was donne at the chardge of Jack Young (afterwards knighted) who, walking there when the grave was covering, gave the fellow eighteen pence to cutt it.

VII

The train leaves Paddington at 6.05 (6.5 is the way they write it) and the engine is called *Polar Star*. It doesn't go north, though, but westerly, into a green valley of sunset. It takes you into something even west of sunsets, that train—not an express happily, but a "stopping train" that loiters you gently into a land where even the railway platforms are gardens of flowers. At Taplow you'll lean out to smell them, not wondering why

poets live there. Off to the left you've seen Windsor Castle, pink in the flush of light, the royal standard aloft. Sir Thomas Malory, you say to yourself, ought to be the name of this engine. Such green and gold is afloat as shines through the boles of Arden. The elderly sage with wildly rumpled gray hair, pondering sheets of diagrams in the far corner of the smoker, might be Merlin himself. It is obviously an Oxford don.

There is a green fold of the world, a gap between the Chilterns and the Berkshire downs, where you will pass warily. Brightnesses other than sunset and Thames river flow through that dip. More than thirteen years of queerness go behind you as *Polar Star* trundles through. Old thoughts, like the swifts nesting in the railway cuttings, flicker on swordlike wing. Mossed tile roofs, chimney pots with blue threads of smoke; sweeps of yellow mustard in slopy fields. While you are standing at the Goring station, the world goes by with a roar and a ribboning flicker of plate glass windows—the Plymouth Express. Those names—Pangbourne, Cholsey, Moulsoford, Wittenham Clumps. There was once a boy on a bicycle——

When you pass through that gap you are in a queer world indeed. Anything can happen. It is the battleground where old Arden elves retreat for their last stand. Railway stations are tranquil as

monasteries in the evening clearness. At Didcot there was a sound of anthems. It will never be explained, was it the station porters at their vesper hymn? Nothing can break that magic, for long ago you shut the door upon it and triple turned the key. Nothing can spoil it—and every incongruity adds to its Shakespearean comedy. Even the sign-boards in those enamelled meadows—*Beecham's Pills Lose No Time*.

And Oxford again—reached at dusk; the dark passages of the Golden Cross inn; still time for a twilight stroll to see how in bookshop windows Dean Inge's *Religion and the Ultimate* battles for place with *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*. Oxford, the toy capital of fairyland, the youngest place on earth. The boys (how appallingly young they look) off to some revelry in their dinner jackets. The girls on their bikes next morning, their pretty sturdy legs wreathed in a flutter of rising skirts—just as ever, except the skirts now are shorter. Their new black caps—like medieval abbesses; that's different anyway. Oxford with a Woolworth's on the Corn. Go and have your bitter beer in the secret little Turf tavern, hidden away under New College bell tower. Not one visitor in ten thousand ever hears about the Turf. Go there and have your beer and remember you're still young.

PAUMANOK

I CALL him Paumanok, because I feel him specially in the earth of Long Island; but he lives everywhere. I have known him in the hot sun of Pennsylvania, where copper light rallies like Roman helmets round the boles of pachyderm beeches; in the linden arches and cool evening of moated Burgundy. He lives in every poet's heart, "and being helped, inhabits there." He is the dearest enemy of all, the darkest angel, *terroæ filius*, spirit of mockery and loss.

He does not need to put his words in rhyme and soothe soft minds with sentimental music. He speaks direct. He is the lightning in the sycamore, the tunnelled anthill teeming in the sun. He is the spark of horror burning in the brain, the despair of poets waiting for a word; the silence fallen on lovers in whose reins warm understanding runs and yet they're tightened with idiot denials. Poets are his meat. He mocked Will Shakespeare, tweaked Molière, and that young fellow here in Cold Spring Harbor—what was

his name? Walt Whitman. So he mocks us all with terrene malice, and stings us to achievement unawares.

It is part of his sport that one should attempt to write of him at all. Clever people would deny his existence. There is a strange passage in Whitman's "Song of Myself" where for a moment Walt seemed ready to recant all his bravest doctrine. "I am given up by traitors, I talk wildly, I have lost my wits." That was when he was in the throe of Paumanok, the cruel imp. But blessed imp too, for in that quicksilver misery we all find ourselves one.

He is not content until we have humiliated, and confessed him. Absurdity, be thou my good, is the cry in his dark shriving boxes. At least confessions made to him are secret enough and rarely blabbed. Poets, for whom every darkness is Hallowe'en, sometimes pay their devoir to him in jolly masquerade. In prose it is rare. Poetry, the voice of dying men (or men being born again, who can tell?) is less mannerly.

This is part of his quaintness, that in those regions of refreshment where poets, theoretically, find their peace, his wave-length is most palpable. I mean in the country, close to soil, far from the gallant rectilinears and huge comedy of town. In the new washed world of clear morning things speak too plainly of what they mean. The bee

asleep in the hollyhock, the spider fiercely attentive in his silver ambush, the warm diffusion of mint leaves by the kitchen steps, the acorns rattling on the roof—every one a reminder of the vast tensions that hold the world together. The red beads of the dogwood tree strew the ground; and now the acorns are crackled underfoot: how many acorns must be trodden for one that comes to sprout? Panther-coloured prairies of Long Island, ardently tawny under dark wet sky; seagulls going effortless with the wind, their cusped arc of wings as unutterably curved as the lips of women adored, how does one obey the paradigm of these symbols? Paumanok laughs, and makes the poet laugh at himself. It cannot be done. Laughter is followed by silence. The tingling thrill of awe runs like a frost on thighs and shins. So he stands, beautiful ribald angel, between you and your dream.

Most he loves the natural comedian. Wordsworth knew him somewhat well, but that grave spirit offered our *terræ filius* thin sport. The mind of Keats was more his revelry. Keats once called him Belle Dame Sans Mercy. It doesn't matter what you call him: he is not sexed. He is mere mind, pure taunt, unbodied ecstasy of satire and defeat. It is the great laughers he can cudgel best. Blake knew him, and Meredith. He stands, ready to tweak, on every blank page. He has memorized

every unwritten poem. He sits on the dear corners of lips and sketches those faint lines that all the poets of the world have foolishly wanted to kiss away. He gives eyebrows their enchanted upward lift when they hear music. He hides in the Christmas tree. He abetted the oldest misunderstanding, that between man and God. He loads every rift with ore, so that he can make merry when you overwrite your prose. He drives the wedge of gross comedy that splits the sacred moment in two.

But perhaps cunning that can recognize him is cunning also to outwit. Admitted, he is of less avail. Spirit of futility, he is himself futile. He can take, hard pressed, the prettiest forms. That dangerous lovely book *Sirenica* comes brutally near giving his exact picture: he is the song of the sirens, the Imagined Better Thing. He is implex in every line of this barren bravado, telling me not to be a fool. But for a morning season I outface him. I have rounded Cape Stiff. On a hundred sheets I have made notation of his power, and destroyed them, he prevailing. But in his very homeland I shall snare him, the springald. These autumn thickets, these panther fields, will stand by me. It is for men, for men, not mocking ghosts, to make any ground sacred. It must be trodden by human feet, hear human voices; this gives meaning to the perilous sweetness of rain and air. The old gods are

ESSAYS

dead, I hear him whiffing. Are they, then? Not by a damn sight.

The gods are dead, you say to me,
Old gods of terror and delight—
And on the word, from every tree
A Pan peeps out, a dryad white;
When artists bend their dreams and hands
All ages with one key unlock,
And Master Shakespeare's yellow sands
Are on the shores of Paumanok.

But be not untimely sure. You must prepare your minds for trouble. Did you think that poets spend their lonely nights in vain, just to count the patterns of the sky? Did you think it all a rumour, something invented by hysteric playwrights, a refrain from an old song, a wind rustling dry reeds? No, it is true, and you must let him have his worst with you. Spirit of horror that tells you your dream is fustian; warm guile in the barleycorn that fills you with idle vacations of mirth. He is the bird that flashes by the pane, the cold cold reason even too chill for grief. You must drink his tisane, be it bitter as hemlock. Quiet, quiet then, he'll tell you; so cunning that his mocking whisper can even sound like mercy. Sleep is the remedy, he'll say; and as the first Lethean undulation lifts the slackened line, draw

you back to mooring. Sleep, he whispers, to bring you so much nearer the last silence, when even the weariest head may never lie on the whitest breast.

There are who, in braver moments, over a fiasco of sweet Italian hillside, can talk of sublimating him, spiritualizing. Yes, I am instructed it can be done. But Passive Insistence is also a doctrine—simply Not Insisting. Drink him like wine: float with him as the gull floats in the blue wind across channel. "Their mastery of the air was their surrender to it," says a writer watchful of the gulls. So you may sometimes turn your gale to a wind of clear weather. Just Not Insisting. He can be cozened, too, by a little melancholy. For he can uncoil you your curliest mirth; but who was ever mocked out of a favourite grievance? And poets have whole troops of young and pretty sorrows, ready to dance at their command. The princely Landor (some read him still) knew this. "Poets are in general prone to melancholy; yet the most plaintive ditty hath imparted a fuller joy, and of longer duration, to its composer, than the conquest of Persia to the Macedonian." A young sorrow, sweet in its innocent finery, is too human, too tender, for our Paumanok to understand. Who was happier than the versifier, sweetening his doubts by measure, when he wrote his paraphrase of the endless theme—

ESSAYS

How do men make their words endure
Beyond the night that has no cure,
And so avail them strong and sure
 Against the dark to-morrow?
Ask of the poet: he knows best,
Remembering how his hand was pressed
Against the softness of your breast
 O lovely lovely Sorrow!

How do we make a garden sweet?
The paths are soft beneath the feet
But ecstasy is incomplete
 Still waiting for to-morrow—
The linden tree let slip her seed,
In every bush the birds agreed
But I perceived my secret need—
 I had no pretty Sorrow!

How do we sanctify this place
And fill the naked air with grace
And carve To-day's imperfect face
 Upon the stone To-morrow?
To keep divinities divine
There must be acid in the wine
And so, to make this place a shrine
 Give room to tender Sorrow!

Let Reason, like the night-owl, pass
And cast his feather on the grass:
I'll find it there, and raise my glass
 And honour him—to-morrow.

PAUMANOK

To-night is Beauty to be sought—
She is a woman, to be taught;
To me, and me alone, she brought
The perfect gift of Sorrow.

The poet carries that most subtle enemy in his own too hospitable heart; but an enemy without whom he would be poor indeed. There are those who know not Paumanok, but I doubt their ignorance is bliss. For oh what serenity when you have done your duty by that imp of clay—have given him your ruddiest tenure for the hour, the week, the month, whatever he required. Then suddenly he is gone. Leaving the heart he leased a while and where you gave him such rich furnish, he can even conclude with what might be thought a tenderness. Perhaps it is his most cultivated cruelty, to unman you so? Yet almost you hear him say, as Sir Kenelm did to the Lady Venetia, "Hold high your gallant head, because I love you."

So he is gone, and the environing earth shines with new colour. There are the panther fields of autumn: they *did* stand by you. You smile, raking among the leaves. Out of silence a word has come. But have no fear that his secrets will out. No one knows him but you.

PRIESTESS

SHE sits within a tall four-sided desk, prettily enclosed as Ianthe or Rhodope in a quatrain by Landor. Across her fine dark head the two bright filaments are as decorative as a Greek fillet. They confirm her air of priestess or sibyl. In that great temple she sits among the fluted columns, a priestess of Mercury. Desk, do I call it? It is prie-dieu, mercy-seat. Yet how much lovelier is she than mere priestess. That cunningest appeal of all to the gust of man: priestess and wench in one.

Her hair, I don't need to tell you, is cropped close down the back, you can admire her glorious nape as she sits with her head bent a little forward. Down into the plain collar of her soft white blouse pass the living curves of her neck. Gosh, I say to myself, maybe I ought to have been a sculptor. Thank goodness I'm not. Not for me the pang of trying to put anything so mobile as that into the sudden death of Form. The sculptor, poor frenzied policeman, can rarely do better than a *proxime*

accessit. He is a cop making an arrest. He usually arrests the Innocent Bystander. The real culprit, Life Itself, escapes.

Her head is either bending tenderly forward, or looking quickly up over the high counter. How cunningly (had you ever thought?) the whole arrangement is planned so that she can watch her little flock of devotees, seeing that they don't leave the bronze confessionals without paying their proper *congé*. Is it that continual changing flex of muscles that makes her neck so comely? A soft light shines upward from her instrument board, so that the rouge of her cheeks—which in a crueller illumination would be excessive—seems just the charmingest flush of vital excitement. It is as though she were daintily embarrassed by the urgency of all these affairs, by the multiplication of calls upon her. That heightened colour of hers, artful as the theatre's tricks, adds such minute but goblin subtlety to the whole ceremony. And her looking up at you, from her low posture beneath the sheltering rampart. Women should always look up. As you watch from one side (oh, incorrigible watcher) under the shifting aperture of her blouse you will see perhaps a flash of that loveliest of curves, the little shallow slope in front of the shoulder. What shoulders she must have, bless her!

Tenderly, I said, she bends forward. There is

an extraordinary gallantry about that head. There is pride in it, the subtle pride of one who has the perfect savvy of her job, isn't going to be buffaloed by anything. But there is sweetness too: the most curious calm gentleness in the shape of her lips bending close to the speaking tube. Oh I know you think I'm absurd, you think I'm romancing; but even if so, what were we put here for but that? I have seen young mothers' lips leaning down just so to the brow of an infant. Delicately she touches the mouthpiece (that ingrate tube of rubber) with her lovely lips, brooding on it, talking into it tenderly, calmly, persuasively. A very small and impish sensitiveness trembles at the corner of those lips. I don't think she knows it is there: but it is at the corners that mouths, like streets, give themselves away. That hungry mouthpiece nestles to her, tightened to her very heart; she nurses Communication on her rich bosom. I have called that great hall a temple, it is just that. The big directories on the rack are like Bibles, and just as worshipfully conned. At least they are sibylline tomes, and one remembers in the Old Testament a book called Numbers. Is not hers, after all, a communion service?

Beauty is a strange conjunction of influences. To me, as I sometimes watch her surrounded by her clients, she seems very beautiful. I will not say she would always seem so, but in her own element

she is mistress of the event. A perfect operator nobly planned, to warn, to comfort, and command. Beautiful as she is, she has to be wise. Calm, unperturbed—with “deliberate speed, majestic instancy”—see her manage her anxious congregation. Noting numbers, making change, watching the row of booths, getting reports on Long Distance calls, doing special kindness for habitual customers, yet beneath all this coruscating detail moves the steady flow of her own temperament. There are some mysterious clients who are there day after day: it appears that they transact all their affairs in this public lobby. It is the cheapest way, surely, of Doing Business.

A whole shifting world of lights twinkles at her command. When her capable hands move, brightnesses flash on and off. As the Book of Numbers accurately says, “The pillars of the court round about, and their sockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their instruments, and with all their service: and by name ye shall reckon the instruments of the charge.” And she “takes the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, with the number of their names.”

She is connoisseur of voices: she knows them all, the anxious, the impatient, the shaken, the rude. She even knows, perhaps, the inward sickness that precedes some connection of destiny. That troublesome infant on her breast, how gravely, how

wisely, how softly she cajoles it! "I'm waiting for a report on that Cincinnati call." "That's four times I've asked for a report. It's ridiculous." That is her severest reproach to those other unseen sisters who haven't made good. "It's ridiculous." Kindly she shepherds her little flock. She intercedes for them with the enigmatic divinities down the little tube. "There's a party here's in a hurry, he's only got a few minutes." "Now be sure to say that very distinctly, it's a personal call, he's got to get that party." And meanwhile carrying in her mind the details of a dozen concurrent calls. "Doylestown's still busy." "Philadelphia in Booth 15." "Mister, you forgot something." (This to the absent-minded patron who, having got his call, is hurrying away forgetting the fee.) "I'm still waiting for a report on Cincinnati." "Give me the manager's office, this is ridiculous."

Madonna of the wires! Calm, beautiful, unhurried, ready with equal skill to transact business of life and death or casual banter, you may not wonder that her motley congregation adore her. They save for her that specially healthy affection that men have for women who are competent in their task. And you may know too, by the quick alert flash of those handsome gray eyes that she is not just operator. She is woman, with all woman's terrifying charm. "You mustn't mind

my admiring you a little," I said to her. "I think you're wonderful."

For there never was priestess yet who did not tempt men to drag her away from the altar and make mere woman of her.

THE TREE THAT DIDN'T GET TRIMMED

IF YOU walk through a grove of balsam trees you will notice that the young trees are silent; they are listening. But the old tall ones—especially the firs—are whispering. They are telling the story of The Tree That Didn't Get Trimmed. It sounds like a painful story, and the murmur of the old trees as they tell it is rather solemn; but it is an encouraging story for young saplings to hear. On warm autumn days when your trunk is tickled by ants and insects climbing, and the resin is hot and gummy in your knots, and the whole glade smells sweet, drowsy, and sad, and the hardwood trees are boasting of the gay colours they are beginning to show, many a young ever-green has been cheered by it.

All young fir trees, as you know by that story of Hans Andersen's—if you've forgotten it, why not read it again?—dream of being a Christmas Tree some day. They dream about it as young girls dream of being a bride, or young poets of having a

volume of verse published. With the vision of that brightness and gayety before them they patiently endure the sharp sting of the ax, the long hours pressed together on a freight car. But every December there are more trees cut down than are needed for Christmas. And that is the story that no one—not even Hans Andersen—has thought to put down.

The tree in this story should never have been cut. He wouldn't have been, but it was getting dark in the Vermont woods, and the man with the ax said to himself, "Just one more." Cutting young trees with a sharp, beautifully balanced ax is fascinating; you go on and on; there's a sort of cruel pleasure in it. The blade goes through the soft wood with one whistling stroke and the boughs sink down with a soft swish.

He was a fine, well-grown youngster, but too tall for his age; his branches were rather scraggly. If he'd been left there he would have been an unusually big tree some day; but now he was in the awkward age and didn't have the tapering shape and the thick, even foliage that people like on Christmas trees. Worse still, instead of running up to a straight, clean spire, his top was a bit lopsided, with a fork in it.

But he didn't know this as he stood with many others, leaning against the side wall of the greengrocer's shop. In those cold December days he was

very happy, thinking of the pleasures to come. He had heard of the delights of Christmas Eve: the stealthy setting-up of the tree, the tinsel balls and coloured toys and stars, the peppermint canes and birds with spun-glass tails. Even that old anxiety of Christmas trees—burning candles—did not worry him, for he had been told that nowadays people use strings of tiny electric bulbs which cannot set one on fire. So he looked forward to the festival with a confident heart.

“I shall be very grand,” he said. “I hope there will be children to admire me. It must be a great moment when the children hang their stockings on you!” He even felt sorry for the first trees that were chosen and taken away. It would be best, he considered, not to be bought until Christmas Eve. Then, in the shining darkness someone would pick him out, put him carefully along the running board of a car, and away they would go. The tire-chains would clack and jingle merrily on the snowy road. He imagined a big house with fire glowing on a hearth; the hushed rustle of wrapping paper and parcels being unpacked. Someone would say, “Oh, what a beautiful tree!” How erect and stiff he would brace himself in his iron tripod stand.

But day after day went by, one by one the other trees were taken, and he began to grow troubled. For everyone who looked at him seemed to have

an unkind word. "Too tall," said one lady. "No, this one wouldn't do, the branches are too skimpy," said another. "If I chop off the top," said the greengrocer, "it wouldn't be so bad?" The tree shuddered, but the customer had already passed on to look at others. Some of his branches ached where the grocer had bent them upward to make his shape more attractive.

Across the street was a Ten Cent Store. Its bright windows were full of scarlet odds and ends; when the doors opened he could see people crowded along the aisles, cheerfully jostling one another with bumpy packages. A buzz of talk, a shuffle of feet, a constant ringing of cash drawers came noisily out of that doorway. He could see flashes of marvellous colour, ornaments for luckier trees. Every evening, as the time drew nearer, the pavements were more thronged. The handsomer trees, not so tall as he but more bushy and shapely, were ranked in front of him; as they were taken away he could see the gayety only too well. Then he was shown to a lady who wanted a tree very cheap. "You can have this one for a dollar," said the grocer. This was only one third of what the grocer had asked for him at first, but even so the lady refused him and went across the street to buy a little artificial tree at the toy store. The man pushed him back carelessly, and he toppled over and fell alongside the wall. No one bothered to pick him

up. He was almost glad, for now his pride would be spared.

Now it was Christmas Eve. It was a foggy evening with a drizzling rain; the alley alongside the store was thick with trampled slush. As he lay there among broken boxes and fallen scraps of holly strange thoughts came to him. In the still northern forest already his wounded stump was buried in forgetful snow. He remembered the wintry sparkle of the woods, the big trees with crusts and clumps of silver on their broad boughs, the keen singing of the lonely wind. He remembered the strong, warm feeling of his roots reaching down into the safe earth. That is a good feeling; it means to a tree just what it means to you to stretch your toes down toward the bottom of a well-tucked bed. And he had given up all this to lie here, disdained and forgotten, in a littered alley. The splash of feet, the chime of bells, the cry of cars went past him. He trembled a little with self-pity and vexation. "No toys and stockings for me," he thought sadly, and shed some of his needles.

Late that night, after all the shopping was over, the grocer came out to clear away what was left. The boxes, the broken wreaths, the empty barrels, and our tree with one or two others that hadn't been sold, all were thrown through the side door into the cellar. The door was locked and he lay

TREE THAT DIDN'T GET TRIMMED

there in the dark. One of his branches, doubled under him in the fall, ached so he thought it must be broken. "So this is Christmas," he said to himself.

All that day it was very still in the cellar. There was an occasional creak as one of the bruised trees tried to stretch itself. Feet went along the pavement overhead, and there was a booming of church bells, but everything had a slow, disappointed sound. Christmas is always a little sad, after such busy preparations. The unwanted trees lay on the stone floor, watching the furnace light flicker on a hatchet that had been left there.

The day after Christmas a man came in who wanted some green boughs to decorate a cemetery. The grocer took the hatchet, and seized the trees without ceremony. They were too disheartened to care. Chop, chop, chop, went the blade, and the sweet-smelling branches were carried away. The naked trunks were thrown into a corner.

And now our tree, what was left of him, had plenty of time to think. He no longer could feel anything, for trees feel with their branches, but they think with their trunks. What did he think about as he grew dry and stiff? He thought that it had been silly of him to imagine such a fine, gay career for himself, and he was sorry for other young trees, still growing in the fresh hilly country, who were enjoying the same fantastic dreams.

Now perhaps you don't know what happens to the trunks of leftover Christmas trees. You could never guess. Farmers come in from the suburbs and buy them at five cents each for bean-poles and grape arbours. So perhaps (here begins the encouraging part of this story) they are really happier, in the end, than the trees that get trimmed for Santa Claus. They go back into the fresh, moist earth of spring, and when the sun grows hot the quick tendrils of the vines climb up them and presently they are decorated with the red blossoms of the bean or the little blue globes of the grape, just as pretty as any Christmas trinkets.

So one day the naked, dusty fir-poles were taken out of the cellar, and thrown into a truck with many others, and made a rattling journey out into the land. The farmer unloaded them in his yard and was stacking them up by the barn when his wife came out to watch him.

"There!" she said. "That's just what I want, a nice long pole with a fork in it. Jim, put that one over there to hold up the clothesline." It was the first time that anyone had praised our tree, and his dried-up heart swelled with a tingle of forgotten sap. They put him near one end of the clothesline, with his stump close to a flower bed. The fork that had been despised for a Christmas star was just the thing to hold up a clothesline. It was wash-

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day, and soon the farmer's wife began bringing out wet garments to swing and freshen in the clean, bright air. And the very first thing that hung near the top of the Christmas pole was a cluster of children's stockings.

That isn't quite the end of the story, as the old fir trees whisper it in the breeze. The Tree That Didn't Get Trimmed was so cheerful watching the stockings, and other gay little clothes that plumped out in the wind just as though waiting to be spanked, that he didn't notice what was going on—or going up—below him. A vine had caught hold of his trunk and was steadily twisting upward. And one morning, when the farmer's wife came out intending to shift him, she stopped and exclaimed. "Why, I mustn't move this pole," she said. "The morning glory has run right up it." So it had, and our bare pole was blue and crimson with colour.

Something nice, the old firs believe, always happens to the trees that don't get trimmed. They even believe that some day one of the Christmas-tree bean-poles will be the starting-point for another Magic Beanstalk, as in the fairy tale of the boy who climbed up the bean-tree and killed the giant. When that happens, fairy tales will begin all over again.

THE 1855 PREFACE

ON JULY 21, 1855, Emerson sat down to write a letter that will not soon be forgotten. It was a letter acknowledging the receipt of a book that had been sent him: a book so odd in form and contents that he might well have disregarded it as many busy men disregard haphazard casuals of the mail. The frontispiece, engraved from a tintype, was a portrait, unidentified, of a bearded man, wistful or sulky in expression, arrogant in posture. His hat was tilted sideways, one hand knuckled on hip, flannel blouse open at the neck showing a dark tape-edged stevedore's undershirt. The quarto titlepage bore no author's name and no publisher's imprint. There followed, without a single word of explanation, a ten-page halloo in small dense type, double-columned on the big leaves; and the body of the volume itself, which looked like neither prose nor poetry, began with the announcement—dubiously chosen, one might think, to placate the New England brahmin—

I celebrate myself,
And what I assume you shall assume.

One could not have been surprised if Mr. Emerson had shuddered slightly, taken one half-fascinated glance at the dark undershirt, murmured, "It's magnificent but it's not Daguerre," and turned to the proceedings of the Harvard chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

"I find it," wrote Emerson, "the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed." And his pen, gathering speed, went on to say words that are among the necessary footnotes in any permanent history of American literature.

Yes, it is seventy years since *Leaves of Grass* was first printed. In that lifetime it has passed through every vicissitude. Worshipped by the more sentimental radicals, shrunk from by the solid bourgeois, unheard of by the cameradoes for whom it was supposedly written, the target of attorney-generals in its youth, the perplexity of a dozen publishers, the gold-mine of anthologists and the meal-ticket of parodists, now it stands in almost Biblical dignity. No wildest flurry of contemporary censorship has dared to propose any mincing of its astounding meat. Its blurtings are accepted like those of the Old Testament. I suppose the pained moralist feels as he does of the deplorabilia of Israel, that they are unpardonable but that somehow the author meant well. Then there are still others, the intellectuals and

enthusiasts such as Swinburne who, after fierce espousal, recanted and cried that Whitman's muse was a "Hottentot wench under the influence of cantharides and adulterated rum." But, in its seventieth year, *Leaves of Grass* really begins to be absorbed into the actual tissue of American life. Whitman's reputation begins to be a business asset. They have named the new hotel in Camden, N. J., the Walt Whitman, and the Camden Chamber of Commerce has issued a leaflet about him.

In that great book not the least important thing was the densely typed Preface, which unaccountably disappeared from so many printings and is at last restored—"unboulderized," as a publisher friend of mine says—in Professor Emory Holloway's Inclusive Edition of the *Leaves*. For surely that magnificent outburst, essential to any reasonable notion of what Walt was about, is one of the most precious documents in American ink. How is it that Emerson's *Fortune of the Republic* and *Young American* and *American Scholar* have so long been nuggets in the curriculum, Required Reading for College Entrance, etc., and this glorious rocket fired from behind Doctor Beecher's church remains so little known? I swear that Brooklyn Heights rise as tall as Beacon Hill in my orography.

I can only conjecture that the 1855 Preface

sank from sight because it was so astoundingly beautiful. It contains one tedious excursion into mere catalogue, one rather vehement unchastity of phrase, and a needless punctuation of dots which gives a wrong impression that abominable impudences have been excised. Two minutes with blue chalk medicine these, and there remains a masterpiece of noble prose, musical as Pater, freshly and oddly phrased, thrillingly imagined. Emerson may well have rubbed his eyes: it is like the perfect essay that he himself must have dreamed of doing, a theme flowing of its own shining sluice rather than a canny compost of gnomes. But this delicate dignity in prose was so unlike what the wild buffalo notion of Walt demanded, no wonder it was presently stowed in the lazarette.

And who indeed was this Walter Whitman, bearded like the camerado, this mixture of William Blake and Sylvanus Stall? Of the less interesting days of his life we have almost stenographic report; but of the crucial times there is mostly silence and damned little of that. No biographer could salt that strong bird on pinions free until paralysis had crippled him. Our unquestionable facts can almost be summed in a paragraph. He was the son of a Long Island carpenter and builder (a quick-tempered melancholy man with Quaker leanings) and a placid sweet-minded pink-cheeked

mother. Of his many brothers and sisters at least two were feeble-minded or epileptic. He grew up in Brooklyn, then about the size of Hempstead to-day, say seven thousand inhabitants. He left school at thirteen, ran errands for a lawyer, learned to set type, read Walter Scott. Big, dreamy, and loutish, after some country school-teaching round Long Island and some healthy work as a rural newspaper manager, he became that most dangerous character, an itinerant editorial writer. Some very special poison evidently got into his veins about this time, for there is testimony that while doing miscellaneous chit-chat for rather smart sheets in New York he wore a high hat, carried a cane, and always flowers in his buttonhole. The high hat I do not yet altogether believe. That his temperance novelette was composed mostly in the reading room of Tammany Hall with gin cocktails for support is more credible; but he was always temperate with liquor. Among the rowdies at Pfaff's he was remarked as "never tipsy and never broke." A great deal (not all) that he wrote for publication in his twenties was unimportant. But probably this experience of turning off half-baked notions about almost anything taught him a secret respect for ideas. He did not take his newspaper work too seriously, for he was always ready to leave the office for a swim. One evening, between the acts

at a theatre, after a drink, he was offered a job in New Orleans. He accepted, and in New Orleans something happened. No one knows just what, but the delightful Bazalgette, his French biographer and translator, says, "I am inclined to think she was a Frenchwoman." Those who have persuaded themselves that the brief New Orleans interlude was a Paphian orgy must reckon with the fact that he had with him his fifteen-year-old brother Jeff, to whom he was devoted. But when Walt returned North a few months later he had mysteriously changed. His beard was growing gray, he wanted to give public lectures, and he became, briefly, a realtor in rapidly growing Brooklyn. Inward, according to the current theory, some fiercening sanity was uncoiling. He bought little notebooks and began to put down, not editorials, but what he really was thinking. In these extraordinary jottings were the seeds of *Leaves of Grass*.

The old gang at Pfaff's must have been staggered by the *Leaves of Grass* preface; this was no genial paragraphing, this was that dangerous combustible known as literature. There is some characteristic Waltian humbug in it; Walt was not always at his best in "tallying" the peculiar virtues of Americans, for how much did he know of other nations? When he extols American beards, "amativeness," and "deathless attachment to freedom," we feel the torsion of a faintly grieving

grin: we know that the French, for example, can outdo us in all three. Moreover, it is only the high-brows (in any land) who care for freedom; the "common people," whom Walt relies on, detest and fear it. But even his little infusion of twaddle is delicious and unawares. When he warms to his high theme he is superb. Tell me any American document that is more gorgeous.

"America does not repel the past." . . . From the first phrase it startles attention like a shout at midnight. Instantly, in that strange opening sentence, the reader feels the spell of impending greatnesses. If at all sensitive to moods and tones, he discerns a voice speaking as one having authority. He is toled on in a tightening suspension of thought. The whole essay is a subpœna to every faculty that deals with high affairs.

There are happy moments when a mind moves in a wider swing than usual, and touches upon shining boundaries. In this manifesto, as in one greater still but not wholly dissimilar, a certain pamphlet on *The Liberty of Unlicensed Printing*, thought long brooded had "got the power within me to a passion." When that happens, "facts are showered over with light." I mention Milton's noble polemic by calculation; not indeed to suggest any comparison, which would be silly; but in the hope of startling a few zealots of literature into the thought that their almost complete disregard

of this Whitman fragment neglects something of very great importance. Among the general run of teachers of "English," who can tell you all about Matthew Arnold's Sweetness and Light, it is hard to find one who even knows of the existence of the 1855 Preface. The other day I saw a publisher's announcement of a professorial work on *The Function and Mechanism of a Sentence*. I may be very unfair, for I haven't read that book; yet I am tempted to wish that such treatises might be put under a penal ban, and that teachers would turn their eyes to such unconsidered richness as Whitman's prose. Perhaps they have imagined that the latter does not give sufficient opportunity for footnotes and learned comment. Then let them annotate the tremendous music of the 1855 Preface. Let them prepare a thesis on Whitman's habit of coming down, in grave easing cadence, on some strong barytone monosyllable to bring his period to a restful close. In more than half of the magnificent paragraphs of this Preface he does so; when he does not, there is an equally good reason for his leaving the voice in movement upward. Anyone who had taken the trouble to read the Preface must have seen that Whitman's poems were not mere bundles of words negligently amassed. His prosody was not random; there were certain rhythms natural to his pulse. Such effects as the ocean-roll of participles in "Out of the Cradle

Endlessly Rocking” are perhaps too familiar to indicate; but examine, in this Preface, the musical diminuendo he employs to close his paragraphs. A few examples of his sentence-ends will show that he was not merely writing: he was composing:

ignorance or weakness or sin.
impossible or baseless or vague.
confusion or jostling or jam.
and shall never be quiet again.
be discharged from that part of the earth.
whose instinct hated the truth.
and look in the mirror with me.
of assault outside of their own.
and stands them again on their feet.
of nature and passion and death.
or sheltered fatness and ease.

The man whose thought fell into such sweet division had medicine in his rhetoric and chiming in his blood.

Such comments are jejune. “Without effort and without exposing in the least how it is done the greatest poet brings the spirit of all events and passions to bear on your individual character as you read.” So let us not try to “expose how it is done.” What is important is that here are “incomparable things said incomparably well,” as Emerson wrote in the famous letter. Walt, “signing for soul and body,” hit upon some of the

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great truths about poetry; you will find them there if you are interested in that sort of thing. Will the years to come "make willing detours to the right hand and the left hand for his sake"? They have already done so. A voice like the 1855 Preface honours the very types that bring it to paper. Whitman's joy and cruelty and despair pass strangely from heart to heart. William Rose Benét wrote a poem some years ago that I think is not widely known:

AFTER HEARING JOHN COWPER POWYS LECTURE ON WALT WHITMAN

The littleness of Man made great,
The shattering seals, the bursting gate,
The taste of iron, the wells of mirth,
The winds of heaven, the salt of earth,
The thunderous and triumphal sea
Locked in one soul's integrity.

O single spirit, piercing word
Across what wild dark waters heard—
Secret, inviolate, fiery sense,
Troubling the stars' magnificence!

But it takes time to cross wild dark waters. Even Emerson lost heart. In May, 1856, he wrote to Carlyle that he had not sent him *Leaves of Grass* because "the book throve so badly with the few to whom I showed it." He added that if

it seemed to Tammias only "an auctioneer's inventory" he might use the book to light his pipe.

And the 1855 Preface, so long smuggled away (perhaps because it damaged the theory of the untutored child of Adam) remains the real miracle. If it existed in manuscript I'd vote for it as the most exciting sheaf of handwriting this country has penned. Not from a green college cloister, nor from the editorial rooms of some reputable publisher, but from that small printer's shack at Fulton and Cranberry streets came this proud statement of the importance of being a poet. Preceding poems that seemed so incredibly personal, it was perfect in anonymous dignity. With admirable judgment Walt kept his own first person singular out of it altogether. Whatever his private qualms (we know that he had many), in this Preface Walt did not argue. He was simply telling us. He had made up his mind to abandon any bid for the "soft eulogies, big money returns, usual rewards." He was "a candidate for the future." Of course, he would not have been Walt, rich mixture of shrewdness and simple craft, if he hadn't gone on digging for what rewards were possible just the same. I suppose no writer was ever so busy composing blurbs for himself, writing notices of his own books and ingeniously getting them into print. But that is irrelevant. It is not surprising that in the first few lines of that

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Preface we encounter so hodiernal a phrase as "broadcast doings day and night." It might be a slogan line for the radio department of this evening's newspaper. He "flooded himself with the immediate age," and took the protective colour of Time itself. In those queer paragraphs a lonely and massive mind comes marching to the appointed closes of thought, with such manly tread that the reader's breath pauses in tune. There are words naïve, there are words arrogant, but there is also one pure undeniable: the thing will be hard to kill. Standing at the composing case in Cranberry Street, our Orson of the Muse (as Meredith called him a little hastily) spoke as only some dozen or so have spoken about poetry. He spoke as Sidney and Ben Jonson and Wordsworth and Shelley and Arnold have spoken. The greatnesses were in conjunction. The time straying toward infidelity he withheld by his steady faith. "Folks expect of the poet to indicate the path between reality and their souls."

Perhaps the time is coming when students of literature will study and cherish the 1855 Preface as a matter of course. One thing that is still really needed is a sort of Whitman primer, a kind of shock absorber or snubber to make the great vehicle easier riding for soft passengers. I think there are still many who have no inkling of the amazing musical effects in the Whitman orchestra.

Consider the lovely cunning of that first stanza in the "Song of the Broad-Axe," playing on four variations of one vowel sound:

Weapon shapely, naked, wan,
 Head from the mother's bowels drawn,
 Wooded flesh and metal bone, limb only one and lip only
 one,
 Gray-blue leaf by red-heat grown, helve produced from
 a little seed sown,
 Resting the grass amid and upon
 To be lean'd and to lean on.

It was Edmund Gosse who said in his admirable essay that reading Whitman was like going camping in the wilds; the hiker must take his own conveniences with him. It would be a fascinating task to compile a kind of Whitman Scouting Kit, a knapsack of the forest lore necessary for a reader to make himself comfortable in that National Park. There are briars and rattlesnakes in the underbrush; there are thickets of tinder where a careless spark can set whole acres ablaze. There is calamus root, carminative and tonic only in cautious nibbles. But when you know your trails there is no better camping; there are, in the prayer book's great phrase, those things requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul.

But in any case, before one proceeds to what

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Walt humorously called his "endless announcements," I think it only fair that he should read the messages that Walt intended to go with them. They are as important in American literature as the Gettysburg speech in American history.

AN OXFORD SYMBOL

WHEN in October, 1910, we arrived, in a hansom, at the sombre gate of New College, Oxford; trod for the first time through that most impressive of all college doorways, hidden in its walled and winding lane; timidly accosted Old Churchill, the whiskered porter, most dignitarian and genteel of England's Perfect Servants; and had our novice glimpse of that noble Front Quad where the shadow of the battlemented roof lies patterned across the turf—we were as innocently hopeful, modestly anxious for learning and eager to do the right thing in this strange, thrilling environment as ever any young American who went looking for windmills. No human being (shrewd observers have marked) is more beautifully solemn than the ambitious Young American. And, indeed, no writer has ever attempted to analyze the shimmering tissue of inchoate excitement and foreboding that fills the spirit of the juvenile Rhodes Scholar as he first enters his Oxford college. He arrives with his mind a gentle confusion of hearsay about Walter Pater,

Shelley, boat races, Mr. Gladstone, Tom Brown, the Scholar Gypsy, and little Mr. Bouncer. Kansas City or Sheboygan indeed seem far away as he crosses those quadrangles looking for his rooms.

But even Oxford, one was perhaps relieved to find, is not all silver-gray mediæval loveliness. The New Buildings, to which Churchill directed us, reached through a tunnel and a bastion in a rampart not much less than a thousand years elderly, were recognizably of the Rutherford B. Hayes type of edification. Except for the look-off upon gray walls, pinnacles, and a green tracery of gardens, and the calculated absence of plumbing (a planned method of preserving monastic hardiness among light-minded youth), the immense cliff of New Buildings might well have been a lobe of the old Johns Hopkins or a New York theological seminary. At the top of four flights we found our pensive citadel. Papered in blue, upholstered in a gruesome red, with yellow woodwork, and a fireplace which (we soon learned) was a potent reeker. It would be cheerful to describe those two rooms in detail, for we lived in them two years. But what first caught our eye was a little green pamphlet lying on the red baize tablecloth. It was lettered

NEW COLLEGE, OXFORD
Information and Regulations
Revised October, 1910

Our name was written upon it in ink, and we immediately sat down to study it. Here, we thought, is our passkey to this new world of loveliness.

First we found the hours of college chapel. Then, "All Undergraduates are required to perform Exercises." In our simplicity we at first supposed this to be something in the way of compulsory athletics, but then discovered it to mean intellectual exercises. Fair enough, we thought. That is what we came for.

"Undergraduates are required, as a general rule, to be in College or their Lodgings by 11 P. M., and to send their Strangers out before that time. . . . No Undergraduate is allowed to play on any musical instrument in College rooms except between the hours of 1 and 9 P. M., unless special leave has been obtained beforehand from the Dean. . . . No games are allowed in the College Quadrangles, and no games except bowls in the Garden." Excellent, we meditated; this is going to be a serious career, full attention to the delights of the mind and no interruption by corybantic triflers.

"A Term by residence means pernoctation within the University for six weeks in Michaelmas or in Hilary Term, and for three weeks in Easter or in Trinity (or Act) Term." . . . We felt a little uncertain as to just what time of year Hilary and

Act happened. But we were not halting, just now, over technicalities. We wanted to imbibe, hastily, the general spirit and flavour of our new home. . . . "Every member of the College is required to deposit Caution-money. Commoners deposit £30, unless they signify in writing their intention to pay their current Battels weekly; in this case they deposit £10. An undergraduate battling terminally cannot withdraw part of his Caution-money and become a weekly battler without the authority of his parent or guardian." We at once decided that it was best to be a weekly battler. Battling, incidentally, is a word that we believe exists only at Eton and Oxford; dictionaries tell us that it comes from "an obsolete verb meaning to fatten." Sometimes, however, in dispute with the Junior Bursar, it comes near its more usual sense. We wondered, in our young American pride, whether we were a Commoner? We were pleased to note, however, that the alternative classification was not a Lord but a Scholar.

We skimmed along through various other instructions. "A fine of 1s. is charged to the owner of any bicycle not put away before midnight." The owner, or the bicycle, we mused? Never mind—we would soon learn. Coals and faggots, we noted, were variable in price. "The charge for a cold bath is 2d., for a hot 4d., inclusive of bath-towel." The duties of a mysterious person named

as the Bedmaker (but always, in actual speech, the Scout) were punctually outlined. But now we found ourself coming to Kitchen, Buttery, and Store-Room Tariffs. This, evidently, was the pulse of the machine. With beating heart we read on, entranced:

Beer, Mild.....	half-pint	1½
Beer, Mixed.....	"	2
Beer, Strong.....	"	2½
Beer, Treble X.....	glass	3
Beer, Lager.....	pint	6
Stout.....	half-pint	2
Cider.....	"	1½

There was something significant, we felt by instinct, in the fact that Treble X was obtainable only by the glass. Vital stuff, evidently. Our education was going to come partly in casks, perhaps? In the Kitchen Tariff we read, gloatingly, magnificent syllables. *Grilled Sausages and Bacon*, commons, 1/2. *Deville Kidneys*, commons, 1/. (A "commons," we judged, was a large portion; if you wanted a lesser serving, you ordered a "small commons.") *Chop with Chips*, 11d. *Grilled Bones*, 10d. *Kedgerree*, plain or curried, commons, 9d. (Oh noble kedgerree, so nourishing and inexpensive, when shall we taste your like again?) Herrings, Bloaters, Kippers, each 3d. (To think that, then, we thought the Junior Bursar's tariff

was a bit steep.) Jelly, Compôte of Fruit, Trifle, Pears and Cream. Creams . . . commons, 6d. "Gentlemen's own birds cooked and served . . . one bird, 1/. Two birds, 1/6."

We went on, with enlarging appreciation, to the Store Room and Cellar Tariffs: Syphons, Seltzer or Soda-water, 4½d. Ginger-beer, per bottle, 2d. Cakes: Genoa, Cambridge, Madeira, Milan, Sandringham, School, each 1/. Foolscap, per quire, 10d. Quill Pens, per bundle, 1/6. Cheroots, Cigars, Tobacco, Cigarettes—and then we found what seemed to be the crown and cream of our education, LIST OF WINES.

Port, 4/ per bottle. Pale Sherry, 3/. Marsala, 2/. Madeira, 4/. Clarets: Bordeaux 1/6. St. Julien, 2/. Dessert 4/. Hock or Rhenish Wine: Marcobrunner, 4/. Niersteiner, 3/. Moselle, 2/6. Burgundy, 2/ and 4/. Pale Brandy, 5/. Scotch Whiskey, 4/. Irish Whiskey, 4/. Gin, 3/. Rum, 4/.

It is really too bad to have to compress into a few paragraphs such a wealth of dreams and memories. We sat there, with our little pamphlet before us, and looked out at that great panorama of spires and towers. We have always believed in falling in with our environment. The first thing we did that afternoon was to go out and buy a corkscrew. We have it still—our symbol of an Oxford education.

SCAPEGOATS

THE man who did most (I am secretly convinced) to deprive American literature of some really fine stuff was Mr. John Wanamaker. It was in his store, some years ago, that I bought a kind of cot-bed or couch, which I put in one corner of my workroom and on which it is my miserable habit to recline when I might be getting at those magnificent writings I have planned. Every evening I pile up the cushions and nestle there with *The Gentle Grafter* or some detective story (my favourite relaxation), saying to myself: "Just ten minutes of loafing". . . .

But perhaps Messrs. Strawbridge and Clothier (also of Philadelphia) are equally at fault. When I wake up, on my Wanamaker divan, it is usually about 2 A. M. Not too late, even then, for a determined spirit to make incision on its tasks. But I find myself moving towards a very fine white-enamelled icebox which I bought from Strawbridge and Clothier in 1918. With that happy faculty of self-persuasion I convince myself it is only to see whether the pan needs emptying or the doors

latching. But by the time I have scalped a blackberry pie and eroded a platter of cold macaroni *au gratin*, of course work of any sort is out of the question.

So do the Philistines of this world league themselves cruelly against the artist, plotting temptation for his carnal deboshed instincts, joying to see him succumb. Once the habit of yielding is established, Wanamaker, Strawbridge and Clothier (dark trio of Norns) have it their own way. Just as surely as robins will be found on a new-mown lawn, as certainly as bonfire smoke veers all round the brush pile to find out the eyes of the suburban leaf burner, so inevitably do the Divan and the Icebox exert their cruel dominion over us when we ought to be pursuing our lovely and impossible dreams. Wanamaker and Strawbridge and Clothier have blue-prints of the lines of fissure in our frail velleity. As William Blake might have said:

Let Flesh once get a lead on Spirit,
It's hard for Soul to reinherit;
When supper's laid upon a plate
Mind might as well abdicate.

But one of the things I think about, just before I drop off to sleep on that couch, is My Anthology. Like every one else, I have always had an ambition to compile an anthology of my own; several,

in fact. One of them I call in my mind *The Book of Uncommon Prayer*, and imagine it as a kind of secular breviary, including many of those beautiful passages in literature expressing the spirit of supplication. This book, however, it will take years to collect; it will be entirely non-sectarian and so truly religious that many people will be annoyed. People do not care much for books of real beauty. That anthology edited by Robert Bridges, for instance—*The Spirit of Man*—how many readers have taken the trouble to hunt it out?

But the *Uncommon Prayer Book* is not the kind of anthology I have in mind at the moment. What I need is a book that would boil down the best of all the books I am fond of and condense it into a little bouillon cube of wisdom. I have always had in mind the possibility that I might go travelling, or the house might burn down, or I might have to sell my library, or something of that sort. I should like to have the meat and essence of my favourites in permanent form, so that wherever I were I could write to the publisher and get a fresh copy.

This thought came with renewed emphasis the other day when I was talking to Vachel Lindsay. He was saying that he had lately been rereading Swinburne, for the first time in nearly twenty years, and was grieved to see how the text of the poet had become corrupted in his memory. He had

been misquoting Swinburne for years and years, he said, and the errors had been growing more and more firmly into his mind. That led me to think, suppose we had only memory to rely on, how long would the text of anything we loved remain un-blurred? Suppose I were on a desert island and yearned to solace myself by spouting some of the sonnets of Shakespeare? How much could I recapture? Honestly, now, and with no resort to the book on the shelf at my elbow, let me try an old friend:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediments. Love is not love
 That alters when it alteration finds
 Or bends with the remover to remove.
 Oh no, it is an ever-fixed mark
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken—
 Love is the star to every wandering bark
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Then here's something about a sickle, but I can't for the life of me quite get it. Presently I'll look it up in the book and see how near I came.

Before opening the Shakespeare, however, let's have one more try:

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I wail the lack of many a thing I sought
 . . . my dear time's waste—

And all the rest of that sonnet that I can think of is something about "death's dateless night." A pretty poor showing. Of course, I should do better on a desert island: there would be the wide expanse of shining sand to walk upon, and I could throw myself into it with more passion and fury. The secret of remembering poetry is to get a good barytone start and obliterate the mind of its current freight of trifles. The metronomic prosody of the surf would help me, no doubt, and the placid frondage of the breadfruit trees. But even so, the recension of Shakespeare's sonnets that I would write down upon slips of bark would be a very corrupt and stumbling text. Favourite lines would be scrambled into the wrong sonnets, and the whole thing would be a pitiful miscarriage of memory.

The only sagacious conduct of life is to prepare for every possible emergency. I have taken out life insurance, and fire insurance, and burglary insurance, and automobile insurance. I have always insured myself against losing my job by taking care not to work too hard at it, so I wouldn't miss it too bitterly if it were suddenly jerked from under me. But what have I done in the way of Literary Insurance? Suppose, tomorrow, Adventure should carry me away from these bookshelves? How pleasant to have a little microcosm of them that I could take with me!

SCAPEGOATS

And yet, unless I can shake off the servitude of those three Philadelphia mandarins, Wanamaker and Strawbridge and Clothier, I shall never have it.

When I think of the plays that I would have written if it weren't for those three rascals. . . .

TO A NEW YORKER A HUNDRED YEARS HENCE

I WONDER, old dear, why my mind has lately been going out towards you? I wonder if you will ever read this? They say that wood-pulp paper doesn't last long nowadays. But perhaps some of my grandchildren (with any luck, there should be some born, say twenty-five years hence) may, in their years of tottering caducity, come across this scrap of greeting, yellowed with age. With tenderly cynical waggings of their faded polls, perhaps they will think back to the tradition of the quaint vanished creatures who lived and strove in this city in the year of disgrace, 1921. Poor old granfer (I can hear them say it, with that pleasing note of pity), I can just remember how he used to prate about the heyday of his youth. He wrote pieces for some paper, didn't he? Comically old-fashioned stuff my governor said; some day I must go to the library and see if they have any record of it.

You seem a long way off, this soft September morning, as I sit here and sneeze (will hay fever still

exist in 2021, I wonder?) and listen to the chime of St. Paul's ring eleven. Just south of St. Paul's brown spire the girders of a great building are going up. Will that building be there when you read this? What will be the Olympian skyline of your city? Will poor old Columbia University be so far downtown that you will be raising money to move it out of the congested slums of Morning-side? Will you look up, as I do now, to the great pale shaft of Woolworth; to the golden boy with wings above Fulton Street? What ships with new names will come slowly and grandly up your harbour? What new green spaces will your street children enjoy? But something of the city we now love will still abide, I hope, to link our days with yours. There is little true glory in a city that is always changing. New stones, new steeples are comely things; but the human heart clings to places that hold association and reminiscence. That, I suppose, is the obscure cause of this queer feeling that impels me to send you so perishable a message. It is the precious unity of mankind in all ages, the compassion and love felt by the understanding spirit for those, its resting kinsmen, who once were glad and miserable in these same scenes. It keeps one aware of that marvellous dark river of human life that runs, down and down uncountably, to the unexplored seas of Time.

You seem a long way off, I say—and yet it is but

an instant, and you will be here. Do you know that feeling, I wonder (so characteristic of our city) that a man has in an elevator bound (let us say) for the eighteenth floor? He sees 5 and 6 and 7 flit by, and he wonders how he can ever live through the interminable time that must elapse before he will get to his stopping place and be about the task of the moment. It is only a few seconds, but his mind can evolve a whole honeycomb of mysteries in that flash of dragging time. Then the door slides open before him and that instantaneous eternity is gone; he is in a new era. So it is with the race. Even while we try to analyze our present curiosities, they whiff away and disperse. Before we have time to turn three times in our chairs, we shall be the grandparents and you will be smiling at our old-fashioned sentiments.

But we ask you to look kindly on this our city of wonder, the city of amazing beauties which is also (to any man of quick imagination) an actual hell of haste, din, and dishevelment. Perhaps you by this time will have brought back something of that serenity, that reverence for thoughtful things, which our generation lost—and hardly knew it had lost. But even Hell, you must admit, has always had its patriots. There is nothing that hasn't—which is one of the most charming oddities of the race.

And how we loved this strange, mad city of

ours, which we knew in our hearts was, to the clear eye of reason and the pure, sane vision of poetry, a bedlam of magical impertinence, a blind byway of monstrous wretchedness. And yet the blacker it seemed to the lamp of the spirit, the more we loved it with the troubled eye of flesh. For humanity, immortal only in misery and mockery, loves the very tangles in which it has enmeshed itself: with good reason, for they are the mark and sign of its being. So you will fail, as we have; and you will laugh, as we have—but not so heartily, we insist; no one has ever laughed the way your tremulous granfers did, old chap! And you will go on about your business, as we did, and be just as certain that you and your concerns are the very climax of human gravity and worth. And will it be any pleasure to you to know that on a soft September morning a hundred years ago your affectionate great-grandsire looked cheerfully out of his lofty kennel window, blew a whiff of smoke, smiled a trifle gravely upon the familiar panorama, knew (with that antique shrewdness of his) a hawk from a handsaw, and then went out to lunch?

A CALL FOR THE AUTHOR

BUT who will write me the book about New York that I desire? The more I think about it, the more astonished I am that no one attempts it. I don't mean a novel. I would not admit any plot or woven tissue of story to come between the reader and my royal heroine, the City herself. Not to be a coward, should I try to write it myself? It is my secret dream; but, better, it should be written by some sturdy rogue of a bachelor, footfree, living in the very heart of the uproar. Some fellow with a taste and nuance for the vulgar and vivid; a consort of both parsons and bootleggers; a *Beggar's Opera* kind of rascal. I can think of three men in this city who have magnificent powers for such a book; but they are getting perhaps a little elderly—yes, they are over forty! Ginger must be very hot in the mouth of my imagined author. He must be young (dashed if I don't think about 32 is the ideal age to write such a book), but not one of the Extremely Brilliant Young Men. They are too clever; and they are not lonely enough. For this is a lonely job. It's got to

be done *solus*, slowly, with an eye only upon the subject. It has got to show the very tremble and savour of life itself.

The man who will write this book will not necessarily enjoy it. To get into the secret of Herself he has got to have a peculiar feeling about her. For years he must have wrestled with her almost as a personal antagonist. He must have vowed, since he first saw her imperial skyline serrated on blue, to make her his own; a mistress worthy of him, and yet he himself her master. But he must know, in his inward, that in the end she triumphs, she tramples down mind and heart and nerve. Loveliest enemy in the world, implacable victor over reason and peace and all the quieter sanities of the spirit, her mad, intolerable beauty crazes or silences the sensitive mind that woos her. If you think this is only fine writing and romantic tall-talk, then you know her only with the eye, not with the imagination. With good reason, perhaps, her poets have, for the most part, kept mum. Enough for them to see and cherish in imagination her little sudden glimpses. A girl, slender, gayly unconscious of admiration, poises on one foot at the edge of the subway platform, leaning over to see if the train is coming. That gallant figure is perhaps something of a symbol of the city's own soul.

There must be many who feel about Herself

as I do—and, more wisely, are tacit. There are many whose minds have trembled on the steep sills of truth, have felt that golden tremble of reality almost within touch, and rather than mar the half-apprehended fable, have turned troubled away. But there is such poetry in her, and such fine, glorious animal gusto—why is there not some determined attempt to set it down, not with “rhetoricating floscules,” but as it is? Day after day one comes to the attack; and returning, as the sloping sunlight and fresh country air flood the dusty red plush of the homeward smoking-car, readmits the expected defeat. Here is a target for you, O generation of snipers. Let us have done with pribbles and prabbles. Who is the man who will write me the book I crave—that vulgar, jocund, carnal, beautiful, rueful book!

SIR KENELM DIGBY

Sir Kenelm Digby, of whose acquaintance all his contemporaries seem to have been ambitious.

—DR. JOHNSON, *Life of Cowley*.

PROHIBITION, I dare say, is going to make fashionable the private compilation of just such delightful works as *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digbie Opened; London, at the Star in Little Britain, 1669*. Sir Kenelm, "the friend of kings and the special friend of queens," crony of such diverse spirits as Bacon, Ben Jonson, and Oliver Cromwell, kept this notebook of his jocund experiments in home brewing and cookery. Just as nowadays a man will jot down the formula of some friend's shining success in the matter of domestic chianti, so did the admirable Kenelm record "Sir Thomas Gower's Metheglin for Health," or "My Lord Hollis' Hydromel," or "Sir John Colladon's Oat-Meal Pap," or "My Lady Diana Porter's Scotch Collops"; and adding, of course, his own particular triumphs—e.g., "Hydromel as I Made it Weak

for the Queen Mother," "A Good Quaking Bag-Pudding," and "To Fatten Young Chickens in a Wonderful Degree." Sir Kenelm's official duty at the court of Charles the First was Gentleman of the Bed-chamber; but if I had been Charles, I should have transferred him to the Pantry.

The *Closet Opened* (which was not published until after Sir Kenelm's death; he was born 1603, died 1665) is the kind of book delightfully apt for the sad, sagacious, and solitary, for one cannot spend an hour in it without deriving a lively sense of the opulence and soundness of life. The affectionate attention Sir Kenelm pays the raisin makes him seem almost a Volsteadian figure: in his pages that excellent and powerful fruity capsule plays, perhaps for the first time in history, a heroic and leading rôle. Consider this:

TO MAKE ALE DRINK QUICK

When small Ale hath wrought sufficiently, draw into bottles; but first put into every bottle twelve good raisins of the Sun split and stoned. Then stop up the bottle close and set it in sand (gravel) or a cold dry Cellar. After a while this will drink exceedingly quick and pleasant. Likewise take six Wheat-corns, and bruise them, and put into a bottle of Ale; it will make it exceeding quick and stronger.

Kenelm was not only a good eater; he was a devilish good writer. The fine lusty root of English

prose was in him. If this is not true literature, we know it not:

ANOTHER CLOUTED CREAM

Milk your Cows in the evening about the ordinary hour, and fill with it a little Kettle about three quarters full, so that there may be happily two or three Gallons of Milk. Let this stand thus five or six hours. About twelve a Clock at night kindle a good fire of Charcoal, and set a large Trivet over it. When the fire is very clear and quick, and free from all smoak, set your Kettle of Milk over it upon the Trivet, and have in a pot by a quart of good Cream ready to put in at the due time; which must be, when you see the Milk begin to boil simply. Then pour in the Cream in a little stream and low, upon a place, where you see the milk simmer. . .

To simmer—a word of sheer genius! There are many such in his recipes.

We find the raisin again at work in his directions:

TO MAKE EXCELLENT MEATHE

To every quart of Honey, take four quarts of water. Put your water in a clean Kettle over the fire, and with a stick take the just measure, how high the water cometh, making a notch, where the superficies toucheth the stick. As soon as the water is warm, put in your Honey, and let it boil, skimming it always, till it be very clean; Then put to every Gallon of water, one pound of the best Blew-raisins of the Sun, first clean picked from the stalks, and clean washed. Let them remain in

the boiling Liquor, till they be thoroughly swollen and soft; Then take them out, and put them into a Hair-bag, and strain all the juice and pulp and substance from them in an Apothecaries Press; which put back into your liquor, and let it boil, till it be consumed just to the notch you took at first, for the measure of your water alone. Then let your Liquor run through a Hair-strainer into an empty Woodden-fat, which must stand endwise, with the head of the upper-end out; and there let it remain till the next day, that the liquor be quite cold. Then Tun it up into a good Barrel, not filled quite full, and let the bung remain open for six weeks. Then stop it up close, and drink not of it till after nine months.

This Meathe is singularly good for a Consumption, Stone, Gravel, Weak-sight, and many more things. A Chief Burgomaster of Antwerpe, used for many years to drink no other drink but this; at Meals and all times, even for pledging of healths. And though He were an old man he was of an extraordinary vigor every way, and had every year a Child, had always a great appetite and good digestion; and yet was not fat.

One of good Sir Kenelm's most famous instructions, which has become fairly well-known, does honour not only to his delicate taste but also to his religious devotion. It is his advice on the brewing of tea—"The water is to remain upon it no longer than whiles you can say the *Miserere* Psalm very leisurely." This advice occurs in the recipe

TEA WITH EGGS

The Jesuite that came from China, Ann. 1664, told Mr. Waller, That there they use sometimes in this manner. To near a pint of the infusion, take two yolks of new laid-eggs, and beat them very well with as much fine Sugar as is sufficient for this quantity of Liquor; when they are very well incorporated, pour your Tea upon the Eggs and Sugar, and stir them well together. So drink it hot. This is when you come home from attending business abroad, and are very hungry, and yet have not conveniency to eat presently a competent meal. This presently discusseth and satisfieth all rawness and indigence of the stomack, flyeth suddainly over the whole body and into the veins, and strengthenth exceedingly and preserves one a good while from necessity of eating. Mr. Waller findeth all those effects of it thus with Eggs. In these parts, He saith, we let the hot water remain too long soaking upon the Tea, which makes it extract into itself the earthy parts of the herb. The water is to remain upon it no longer than whiles you can say the *Miserere* Psalm very leisurely. Thus you have only the spiritual parts of the Tea, which is much more active, penetrative, and friendly to nature.

Sometimes, it is true, one suspects Sir Kenelm of a tendency to gild the lily. In the matter of perfuming his tobacco, this was his procedure:

Take Balm of Peru half an ounce, seven or eight Drops of Oyl of Cinamon, Oyl of Cloves five drops,

Oyl of Nutmegs, of Thyme, of Lavender, of Fennel, of Aniseeds (all drawn by distillation) of each a like quantity, or more or less as you like the Odour, and would have it strongest; incorporate with these half a dram of Ambergrease; make all these into a Paste; which keep in a Box; when you have fill'd your Pipe of Tobacco, put upon it about the bigness of a Pin's Head of this Composition.

It will make the Smoak most pleasantly odoriferous, both to the Takers, and to them that come into the Room; and ones Breath will be sweet all the day after. It also comforts the Head and Brains.

It is a great temptation to go on quoting these seductive formulæ. I feel sure that my tenderer readers would relish instructions for the Beautifying Water or Precious Cosmetick,—for the secret of which ladies of high degree pursued Sir Kenelm all over Europe. (He does not include in the *Closet* any details of the Viper Wine for the Complexion which was said to have caused the death of Lady Digby—a rather painful scandal at the time.) But I fear to trespass on your patience. Let me only add that the ambition of the Three Hours for Lunch Club has long been to hold a DIGBY DINNER, at which all the dishes will be prepared as nearly as possible according to Sir Kenelm's prescriptions. The project offers various perplexities, and might even have to be consummated at sea, beyond the hundred-fathom curve. But if it ever

SIR KENELM DIGBY

comes to pass, the following menu, carefully chosen from Sir Kenelm's delicacies, seems to me promising:

Portugal Broth, As It Was Made for the Queen
 Sack with Clove Gillyflowers
 Sucket of Mallow Stalks
 A Herring Pye
 A Smoothing Quiddany of Quinces
 My Lady Diana Porter's Scotch Collops
Mead, from the Muscovian Ambassador's Steward
 The Queen Mother's Hotchpot of Mutton
 Pease of the Seedy Buds of Tulips
 Boiled Rice in a Pipkin
 Marmulate of Pippins
Dr. Bacon's Julep of Conserve of Red Roses
 Excellent Spinage Pasties
Pleasant Cordial Tablets, Which Strengthen Nature
 Small Ale for the Stone
 A Nourishing Hachy
 Plague Water
 Marrow Sops with Wine
My Lord of Denbigh's Almond Marchpane
 Sallet of Cold Capon Rosted
My Lady of Portland's Minced Pyes
 The Liquor of Life
 A Quaking Bag-Pudding
 Metheglin for the Colic

But I must not mislead you into thinking that Sir Kenelm was merely a convivial trencherman.

His biography as related in the Encyclopædia Britannica is as diverting as a novel—more so than many. Infant prodigy, irresistible wooer, privateer, scientist, religious controversialist, astrologer, and a glorious talker, he made a profound impression on the life of his time. But, as so often happens, his name has been carried down to posterity not by the strange laborious treatise he regarded as his opus maximum, but by his chance association with one of the great books of all time. When Digby was under honourable confinement (as a “Popish recusant”) at Winchester House, Southwark, in 1642, he was busy there with chemical experiment and the MS. of his *Of Bodies and Mans Soul* (of which more in a moment). Apparently they treated political prisoners with more indulgence in those days. One evening he received a letter from his friend the Earl of Dorset, urging him to read a book that was making a stir among the intellectuals. One may think it was perhaps a trifle niggardly of Dorset merely to have recommended the book. To a friend in jail, surely he might (and it was just before Christmas) have sent a copy as a present. But the liberality of the Earl is not to be called in question: he had made Sir Kenelm at least one startlingly gracious gift—viz. Lady Digby herself, previously Dorset’s mistress. This oddly amusing story, or gossip, may be pursued in Aubrey’s *Brief Lives*, a fascinat-

ing book (published by the Oxford Press)—a sort of Social Register of seventeenth century England.

“Late as it was” when Sir Kenelm received the letter from his benefactor and colleague, he sent out at once (mark the high spirit of the true inquirer; also the sagacity of seventeenth century booksellers, who kept open at night)—

To let you see how the little needle of my Soul is thoroughly touched at the great Loadstone of yours, and followeth suddenly and strongly, which way soever you becken it. . . . I sent presently (as late as it was) to *Pauls Church-yard*, for this Favourite of yours, *Religio Medici*: which found me in a condition fit to receive a Blessing; for I was newly gotten into my Bed. This good natur’d creature I could easily perswade to be my Bed-fellow, and to wake with me, as long as I had any edge to entertain my self with the delights I sucked from so noble a conversation.

Rarely have the pleasures of reading in bed had such durable result. The following day he spent in pouring out a long, spirited and powerful letter to Dorset (75 printed pages) which has become famous as *Observations upon Religio Medici*, and a few years later was included as a supplement to that book—where it still remains in most editions. In this tumbling out of his honourable meditations and excitements, Sir Kenelm took issue pretty smartly with Dr. Browne on a number of points,

particularly in regard to his own special hobby of Immortality. He, just as much as the Norwich physician, loved to lose himself in an *Altitudo*; but in some cloudlands of airy doctrine Browne seemed to him too precise. "The dint of Wit," Digby remarked felicitously of some theological impasse, "is not forcible enough to dissect such tough matter."

These *Observations* are of more than casual importance. Dorset, apparently, took steps (unknown to Digby) to have them published; and report of this coming blast roused Browne to protest courteously against "animadversions" based upon the unauthorized and imperfect version of his book—his own "true and intended Originall" being by this time in the printer's hands. Digby had written his observations without knowing who the author of *Religio* was. The letters that now passed between him and Browne are an exhilarating model of controversy goldenly conducted between gentlemen of the grand manner. "You shall sufficiently honour me in the vouchsafe of your refute," writes Browne, "and I oblige the whole world in the occasion of your Pen." To which Digby, avowing that his comments were written without thought of print and merely as a "private exercitation," charmingly disclaims any ambition to enter public argument with so superior a scholar. "To encounter such a sinewy opposite,

or make Animadversions upon so smart a piece as yours is, requireth such a solid stock and exercise in school learning. My superficial besprinkling will serve only for a private letter, or a familiar discourse with Lady auditors. With longing I expect the coming abroad of the true copy of the Book, whose false and stoln one hath already given me so much delight." The delightful remark about lady auditors causes one to suspect that even in that day the germ of the lecture passion was moving in circles of high-spirited females.

Digby and Browne were evidently kinsprits. They were nearly of an age; Browne was a physician, and Digby—though many considered him a mountebank and charlatan—had a genuine scientific zeal for medical dabbings. His Powder of Sympathy, a nostrum for healing wounds at a distance, has been a cause of merriment among later generations; but Sir Kenelm was no fool and I am not at all sure that there wasn't much excellent sense in his procedure. The injury itself was washed and kept under a clean bandage. The Powder of Sympathy was to be prepared from a paste of vitriol, and the instructions included necessity for mixing and exposing it in sunshine. Sir Kenelm was quite aware of the public appetite for hocus-pocus, and surely there was a touch of anticipatory Christian Science and Coué in his idea of keeping the patient's mind off the trouble

and giving him this harmless amusement in the open air. For the sympathetic powder, please note, was never to be applied to the wound itself, but only to something carrying the blood of the injured person—a stained bandage, a garment, or even the weapon with which the damage was done. The injury was left to the curative progress of Nature. This theory of treating not the wound but the weapon might well be meditated by literary critics. For instance, when some toxicated energumen publishes an atrocious book, the best course to pursue is not to attack the author but to praise Walter de la Mare or Stella Benson. This may be termed the allopathic principle in criticism; but few of us are steadfast enough to adhere to it.

Digby's *Memoirs*—not published until 1827—exhibit him as the swashbuckler, and amorist by no means faint. They are amusing enough but give only a carnal silhouette. Perhaps he did not write the book himself: there is a vein of burlesque in the narrative that makes me suspicious. It purports to be an account of Sir Kenelm's fidelity to his wife, the lovely Venetia; and we are told that the account was written under Antonian pressure. Importuned by ladies of much personal generosity and recklessness, Sir Kenelm austere-ly retires to a cave and pens this confession of uxorious loyalty. When you consider that the relations of Sir Kenelm and Lady Venetia were

one of the fashionable uproars of the day, you begin to guess that the Memoir (in which all the characters are concealed by romantic pseudonyms) was an elaborate skit intended for private circulation, probably the work of some satirical friend. Exactly so, when any great scandal nowadays is riding on the front pages of the newspapers, do City Room reporters compose humorous burlesques of the printed "stories," and these have delightful currency round the office.

So you will still find legends in print suggesting that Sir Kenelm was a blend of Casanova and Dr. Munyon. He has been attributed what historians used to call "Froude's disease"—an insufficient curiosity as to the total of 2 and 2 when added together. But a man whose memory still makes a page and a half of the Encyclopædia Britannica such lively reading, must have had more than mere animal spirits in his make-up. It is easy to find testimony to his potent social and military accomplishments. But the man himself, his earnest scientific passions, his valiant speculation on human destinies, does not emerge from the entries in encyclopædias. For that you must look into his great book *Two Treatises: The Nature of Bodies, and The Nature of Mans Soul* (1658). By the kindness of Mr. Wilbur Macey Stone, generous and astonishingly Elizabethan explorer of old books, I have an original, tawny and most

aromatic copy of this queer treasure. The title page of the Second Treatise is endorsed, with a charming use of the aspirates—

SAMUEL MELLOR'S BOOK, December 22th 1792.

*Samuel Mellor his my Name
and Cheshire is my Nation
and Burton is my Dwellings
Place and Christ is my
Salvation
this Book given
has A Gift to Samuel Mellor*

Sir Kenelm dedicates the volume to his son, in a touching and honourable letter dated "Paris the last of August 1644." "The calamity of this time" (he says) "hath bereft me of the ordinary means of expressing my affection to you; I have been casting about, to find some other way of doing that in such sort, as you may receive most profit by it. Therein I soon pitched upon these Considerations; that Parents owe unto their children, not only material subsistence for their Body, but much more, spiritual contributions to their better part, their Mind." Accordingly, with perfect gravity and that sombre and Latinized eloquence which was the peculiar gift of his century, he proceeds to expound in nearly 600 dense pages his observations on what we would call nowadays physics and psychology. It would be agreeable enough, if

I did not fear to weary you, to copy down some of Sir Kenelm's delightful shrewd comments. A few of his section headings will serve to give an idea of his matter. For instance:

The experience of burning glasses, and of soultry gloomy weather, prove light to be fire.

Philosophers ought not to judge of things by the rules of vulgar people.

The reason why the motion of light is not discerned coming towards us, and that there is some real tardity in it.

The true sense of the Maxim, that Nature abhorreth from vacuity.

The loadstone sendeth forth its emanations spherically. Which are of two kinds: and each kind is strongest in that hemisphere, through whose polary parts they issue out.

The reason why sometimes the same object appears through the prism in two places: and in one place more lively, in the other place more dim.

How the vital spirits sent from the brain, do run to the intended part of the body without mistake.

Of the rainbow, and how by the colour of any body, we may know the composition of the body it self.

How things renewed in the fantasie, return with the same circumstances that they had at first.

Why divers men hate some certain meats, and particularly cheese.

Here, you will agree, was a man who even when he seems naïf, examined phenomena with his own eyes and with notable sharpness. Delving into the

“crooked narrow cranies & restrayned flexuous rivolets of corporeal things” was, he insisted, a “difficult & spiny affaire”; he was eager to avoid “meer Chymeras and wild paradoxes,” hoped that “by strong abstraction, and by deep retirement into the closet of judgment” he might win “a favourable doom” from his readers. There is no naïveté so dangerous as that of under-estimating the power of another man’s mind. Behind some of his fanciful suggestions there is an astonishing agility of conjecture. On the subject of physiology he is delicious. Hear him (pared down to stark brevity) on the brain:

We may take notice that it containeth, towards the middle of its substance, four concavities, as some do count them: but in truth, these four, are but one great concavity, in which four, as it were, divers roomes, may be distinguished. . . . Now, two rooms of this great concavity, are divided by a little body, somewhat like a skin, (though more fryable) which of itself is clear; but there it is somewhat dimmed, by reason that hanging a little slack, it somewhat shriveleth together: and this, Anatomists do call *Septum lucidum*, or speculum. . . .

This part seemeth to me, to be that and onely that, in which the fansie or common sense resideth . . . it is seated in the very hollow of the brain; which of necessity must be the place and receptacle where the species and similitudes of things doe reside, and where they are moved and tumbled up and down, when we think

of many things. And lastly, the situation we put our head in, when we think earnestly of any thing, favoureth this opinion: for then we hang our head forwards, as it were forcing the specieses to settle towards our forehead, that from thence they may rebound, and work upon this diaphanous substance.

But it is in the Second Treatise (*Declaring the Nature and Operations of Mans Soul; out of which, The Immortality of Reasonable Souls, is Convinced*) that the darling man rises to really dazzling heights. In this mystical, ecstatic and penitential essay he (in Burton's phrase) rectifies his perturbations. He is no longer channeled in the "crooked narrow cranies of corporeal things"; he works from withinward and spirals in happy ether:

To thee then my soul, I now address my speech. For since by long debate, and toilsom rowing against the impetuous tides of ignorance, and false apprehensions, which overthrow thy banks, and hurry thee headlong down the stream, whiles thou art imprisoned in thy clayie mansion; we have with much ado arrived to aim at some little attome of thy vast greatness; and with the hard and tough blows of strict and wary reasoning, we have stricken out some few sparks of that glorious light, which invironeth and swelleth thee: it is high time, I should retire my self out of the turbulent and slippery field of eager strife and litigious disputation, to make my accounts with thee; where no outward noise may distract us, nor any way intermeddle between us, ex-

cepting onely that eternal verity, which by thee shineth upon my faint and gloomy eyes. . . . Existence is that which comprehendeth all things: and if God be not comprehended in it, thereby it is, that he is incomprehensible of us: and he is not comprehended in it, because himself is it. . . . Which way soever I look, I lose my sight, in seeing an infinity round about me: Length without points: Breadth without Lines: Depth without any surface. All content, all pleasure, all restless rest, all an unquietness and transport of delight, all an extasie of fruition.

So don't let any one tell you that Sir Kenelm was only a seventeenth century epicure and boot-legger.

IN HONOREM: MARTHA WASHINGTON

AN AMERICAN figure of national consequence has passed away from the scene of her many glories. We refer to Martha Washington, the Independence Hall cat.

When we worked in the old Philadelphia *Ledger* office, and paragraphs were scarce, we had an un-failing recourse. We would go over to the State House (as they call it in its home town), descend to the cool delightful old cellar underneath the hall, and call on Fred Eckersberg, the engineer. We would see Martha sleeking herself on the flagstones by the cellar steps (she was the blackest cat we ever knew, giving off an almost purple lustre in hot sunlight) or perhaps we would have to search her out among the coal bins where she was fixing a layette for the next batch of kittens. In any case, Martha having been duly admired, Fred Eckersberg would gladly talk about her and tell us what were the latest adventures of her historic life. Which was always good copy, for Fred, having been on friendly terms with Phila-

delphia reporters for many years, knew the kind of anecdotes that would please them. One of Fred's unconscious triumphs was the time he told us of his perplexity about ringing in the New Year in the Independence Hall belfry. It was about Christmas time, 1919. "Last January," he said, "I rang One-Nine-One-Nine to welcome in the New Year. But what am I going to do this time? How can I ring One-Nine-Two-Nought?" We told him we saw no way out of it but to start early in the afternoon of New Year's Eve and ring the whole One Thousand Nine Hundred and Twenty tolls.

We could say a good deal about Martha Washington: her kittens are surely the most noble in the land, charter members of the Colonial Felines of America, all born in the Hall, directly underneath the lobby where the Bell stands. When the most famous brood of all were swaddled, four fine jetty daughters born in November, 1918, Fred christened them Victory, Freedom, Liberty, and Independence. He paid us the greatest compliment of our life by offering us Victory, but at that time we were living in a small apartment in the city and we didn't think it would be a sufficiently dignified home for such a kitten, who deserved nothing less than a residence on the Main Line (Oh, Philadelphia!), with scrapple made on the premises.

But it is time to get down to the point of our

story. Martha has left the Hall. Poor Fred, in his bereavement, has taken pen in hand. We can see him, sitting at his desk down there in the ancient cellar, with all his emblems, souvenirs, and clippings posted up above him and an oblong of gold-and-green brightness shining down through the doorway from the leafy sunshine of the Square. We can see him talking it over with his comrades "the boys"—the State House carpenter and the gardeners, as they sit at their lunch in the cellar. There is the empty saucer, dry and dusty now; in the good old days Fred always brought in a little bottle of milk every morning for Martha. And this is what Fred writes us, word for word:

PHILA Aug 3, 21.

DEAR FRIEND: I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know that I am still at the Hall but the Black cat is gone—without a press agent Martha just became a cat the boys miss her as we had a bag of grass seed the mice got in and they have to hang their lunch on a string but we have a pair of Robbins that sing in the square they would not be long there if Martha was strolling around. We kept one of her kittens when I was on my vacation it was sent to the Morris Refuge with one of the men, on a Friday the next day he got a yellow slip (good bye). Lot of people ask me about her and a Friend of yours left this card: *Dear friend It looks as if Martha is going to have a family—Will you save me two kittens if they are black like their ma!* But she did not have a black kitten so he did not get one.

ESSAYS

She left them for a few days came back when they were sent away this was what got her in wrong, but when a fight between two Thomas cats on the lawn was pulled off Martha's doom was sealed. She had the same sleek black coat the same bright eyes but she was in wrong with our Superintendant so I called up and had a boy from the cat home call for her they said it would cost 50 cents so I left the cents and the job of putting her in the basket to one of the men, but her picture is still on the wall.

We are making changes and repairs about the buildings if the tower would interest you would be pleased to take you up when over in Phila had a party from New York up and they said they knew you.

The old janitor lived in the tower because he had to ring the bell for fires funerals and most everything that went on they tell me one son was born there he had three children, the rafter alongside the open fireplace is burned and we found some old shoes worn by children under the floor, and some bones we thought ment a Crime but upon investigation turned out to be soup bones from Sheep Legs. This is about all. Your Friend

FRED ECKERSBERG
Engineer, Independence Hall.

ACCORDING TO HOYLE

IF IT be true" (remarks old John Mistletoe, in his little known *Life of Edmund Hoyle*) "that a happy life leaves behind it little material for the biographer, and only those whose careers have been marked by the pangs of ambition and the wearinesses of achievement offer maxims for the moralist, then there is little to be said of Edmund Hoyle. And yet it is odd that a man whose name has become proverbial, who lived to the age of close upon a century (1672-1769), and who standardized and codified the chief social amusement of his age into an etiquette which remained unchanged for six generations—it is odd, I say, that this great peaceful benefactor has left so slight a trace in biographical annals. For I ask you, which of Hoyle's contemporaries conferred a more placable and sedentary boon upon the world than he?"

"Hoyle" (continues Mr. Mistletoe) "was a man of very speechless humour. It was his wont to say that he had been lured into the study and metaphysic of whist because it was a silent game.

As is well known, the game was originally called *whisk*; it was Mr. Hoyle who, by his continual utterance of the imperative and hushing monosyllable *Whist!* when gaming with those whose tongues were apt to wag irrelevantly, caused the diversion, at first only in sport, and then in genuine earnest, to be rechristened. It was a sight not to be forgotten, by contemporary account, to see the Master (as he was known) sitting down at the Three Pigeons tavern for his afternoon rubber. The mornings he spent in tutoring wealthy ladies in the rudiments of the fashionable game, this being the chief source of his income. He was very particular, moreover, as to the standing and rank of his pupils; he was much in demand, and could afford to take only such students as satisfied his fastidious taste for youth and beauty. In fact, he anticipated the doctrine announced many years later by John Keats, who remarked, 'I intend henceforth to have nothing to do with the society of ladies unless they be handsome. You lose time to no purpose.'

"It was, I repeat, an agreeable spectacle to witness the Master driving up to the Three Pigeons about the hour of (as we would now say) luncheon, in his white hackney coach with his emblem—the Ace of Hearts—blazoned on the panel. Before the gaming began he would always take a leisurely meal; indeed, it was his habit to

say that no gentleman would ever spend less than three hours at the table. One of his humours was to insist that warm weather was dangerous to his constitution, and that in summer it was desirable to eat sparingly and with deliberation. On days that had, as someone has put it, the humidity of Uriah Heep, this was an example of his menu, which I have found filed in the old papers kept in the vaults of the Three Pigeons:

Service to Mr. Edmund Hoyle, this 28th July 1730, on acct:

A capon broth, with toasted bread
A flagon of small ale
Fricassee of sweetbreads, with currant jelly
A flask of cool Canary
Rosted wild ducks, with cheesecake and parsnips
A jugg of malmsey, from the special butt
A sallet of shrimpes and candied cherries
A hot rabbit pye, with buttered pease and a pottle of mulled claret
Rhubarbe pasty, with barley wine to ease Mr. Hoyle's digestions
Plague water for the hott weather

“Having done suitable homage to this judicious nourishment” (Mr. Mistletoe proceeds), “Mr. Hoyle would have brought to him his own yard of clay, which he would leisurely fill with the best pure Virginia leaf, gazing about him the while

upon the impatient faces of his friends who were anxious to get to the cards. 'Never indulge the carnal appetites immoderately in hot weather,' he would say, blowing out a long blue whiff into the cool twilight of the old taproom, panelled in magnificent dark walnut. This was the last word uttered, for when the Master took his seat at the card table no man dared speak. A sacred quiet filled the place as he reached for the pasteboards and deftly cut for the deal, tossing back his lace cuffs over his lean yellowish wrists, the colour (he was something bilious) of old piano keys. The rest was silence, with only the fall of the cards and the occasional clink of a bottle when Mr. Hoyle refilled his vase of Burgundy, which he always drank while gaming. A life of abstemious control, he said, was needful for one who must keep his wits alert."

DAME QUICKLY AND THE BOILROASTER

SOMETHING had happened to Dame Quickly's storage battery, and all the amperes seemed to have escaped. An extremely friendly and cheerful young man came up from Fred Seaman's garage, with mysterious medical-looking instruments, to grant a consultation. In the course of the chat he remarked, "If you once ride in a *Boilroaster* car, you'll never be satisfied with any other."

His energetic hands were at that moment deep in our loved Dame Quickly's mechanisms; she was wholly at his mercy; naturally we did not feel like contradicting him or saying anything tactless. We wondered, but only privately, whether the fact that Fred Seaman is the local agent for the *Boilroaster* had anything to do with this comment? Or perhaps, we thought to ourself, our friend the battery expert really is a convinced enthusiast for the *Boilroaster*, and felt that way about it before he took a job at Fred Seaman's establishment? We were sorry that William James was dead, for

we felt that the author of *The Will to Believe* would be the man to whom to submit this philosophical problem. We were puzzled, because only a few days earlier another man had said to us (with an equal accent of decisiveness and conviction) that he would rather have a Dame Quickly than any *Boilroaster* ever made. "They stand up better than any of 'em," he had said. Suddenly it occurred to us how useful it would be if there were some kind of spiritual gauge—like the hydrometer our friend was plunging into the cells of the Dame's battery—which one could dip into a man's mind to test the intellectual mixture of his remarks; to evaluate the proportions of those various liquids (the strong acid of self-interest, the mild distilled water of candour, etc.) which electrify his mental ignition.

Well, how about the *Boilroaster*, we said—(searching for a technical term that would show him we are a practical man)—Do they stand up?

He suggested that we get into his own *Boilroaster*, which stood grandly overshadowing the dusty Dame (reminding us of those pictures where a silhouette of the new *Majestic* is placed behind a little picture of the *Teutonic* or some other humble ship of older days) and take a run around Salamis while he tinkered with the battery.

Oh, no, we said nervously. Dame Quickly is the only car we know how to run, and besides the gear

shift is different in the *Boilroaster*; we might get confused and have to come all the way home in reverse, which would be bad for our reputation in the village.

Have you ever ridden in the *Boilroaster*? he asked.

Yes, we said—Fred Seaman took us over to Locust Valley the other evening. (Suddenly a horrid thought struck us. We had thought that Fred had given us that lift over to Locust Valley just in the goodness of his heart. But now we wondered——)

When he left, he put in our hand a handsome book all about the *Boilroaster*. That, we felt, was the first step in breaking down our “sales resistance,” as they say in the *Business 119* course up at Columbia.

We’ve been reading that book, and we want to say that the chaps who write that sort of literature are cunning fellows, and masters of a very insinuating prose style. They begin with a very pretty frontispiece of a *Boilroaster* car standing, all alone and dazzling-new, in a magnificent landscape of snow-clad peaks and clear lakes. How the *Boilroaster* got way up there (evidently somewhere near Banff) without any one driving her, and without even a speck of dust on her fenders, is a mystery. But there she is. Perhaps the man who drove her all those miles from the nearest dis-

tributing agency is at the bar of the C. P. R. Hotel, off behind those pine forests.

All the highbrow critics will tell you that the truly great writers are lovers of Beauty. Well, the anonymous author of the *Boilroaster* book is as keen a champion of Beauty as any one we ever heard of. And not only beauty, but refinement, too. There are two whole pages giving little pictures of "refinements." This is a book, we think, that could be put in the hands of the young without any hesitation. In fact, that is just where we did put it, for the urchin is cutting out the pictures of *Boilroasters* at this very minute. The whole trend of Advertising nowadays (we wonder if they mention this in the lectures on Advertising Psychology up at Columbia) is to give delight to children. We would hate to tell the Cunard Line and the International Mercantile Marine Company how many of their folders our juveniles have scissored up with shouts of delight.

The *Boilroaster* book is going to be a lesson to us. We don't know if we will ever own a *Boilroaster*, but we are certain that before we do we have got to spruce up and be a bit more genteel. At present, we would be a bit of anticlimax riding in a car like that. There is "new beauty in its double bevel body line." We want to look a bit more streamline ourself before we go in for one. There are "massive head lamps, graceful cowl lights, the

louvres are more in number and their edges show a smart touch of gold." There is "a courtesy light illuminating the left side of the car," and a ventilator in the cowl. We don't know exactly what the cowl is, or the louvres, or at any rate we've never discovered them in Dame Quickly.

Just as we are writing this, we see a headline in the papers (in the *Evening Post*, to be accurate) about Sir Charles Higham, who "Sees Advertising as a Great Moral Force." We know of no writer who has a more solid appreciation of moral forces than the author of our *Boilroaster* brochure. What he has to say about "sheer merit," "sound principles," "elimination of waste," "combination of beauty and utility," "superiority and refinement," "good taste" and "harmony of colour" makes this work a genuine essay in æsthetics. Moreover, we like his rational eclecticism. When the car has a 126-inch wheelbase, it makes it very easy riding and gives it charming "roadability." When it has a 119-inch wheelbase, it "gives a short turning radius which makes it remarkably easy to handle." Even in the least details, our author has an eye for loveliness. He confesses himself struck by "the attractive grouping of instruments on the dash, which emphasizes *Boilroaster* individuality." The upholstery, he says, is "restful." The folding seat for the extra passenger is "in reality a comfortable chair." And when we learn that the

opalescent dome and corner lamps "provide enough light for reading," our only regret is that he doesn't add a suggested list of readings for tenants of a *Boilroaster* Enormous Eight.

Unhappily space is lacking to tell you in detail what a competent and winning fellow this author is. In the scientific portions of the work he rivals Fabre—in regard to the clutch, he says "the driven member is a single spider rotating between two rings." His passion for elegance, comfort, simplicity, and economy has never been surpassed—no, not by Plato or Walter Pater. The only drawback about his essay is that we feel we could never live up to the vehicle he describes.

VACATIONING WITH DE QUINCEY

I

HAVING severed our telephone wire and instructed the office boys to tell all callers that we are out at lunch, we look forward to a happy summer. We are going to begin enjoying ourself by systematically exploring the books in the library of the *Evening Post*. On a top shelf, well sprinkled with dust, we have found the excellent collected edition of De Quincey, in fourteen volumes, edited by David Masson. It is true that the first four volumes seem to have disappeared; but even if we begin at Volume V we calculate we shall find enough to keep us entertained for some time.

After we have finished De Quincey we are going to tackle P. T. Barnum's *Struggles and Triumphs*, a book that has long tempted us. We think kindly of the Founding Fathers of the *Post* for having assembled all these interesting volumes for our pleasure.

We have begun De Quincey with Volume V—

Biographies and Biographic Sketches. Some of this—particularly the Joan of Arc—has a faintly familiar taste: perhaps we were made to read it at school. But we do not think we ever read before the magnificent essay on Charles Lamb. There is a long interpolated passage about Joan of Arc which does not seem to have anything to do with Lamb. Perhaps the *North British Review* (in which the essay first appeared in 1848) paid its contributors on a space basis. But, ejecting this parenthesis, it is certainly noble stuff. Moreover, it is interesting to note that at the time De Quincey wrote, Lamb was by no means established on the pinnacle of security as a permanent brightness in our literature. De Quincey writes as though consciously contradicting some opposition. It seems odd to hear him speak of people who “regard him [Lamb] with the old hostility and the old scorn.”

We had intended not to introduce any quotations, for in this very volume De Quincey makes some stinging remarks about people who pad out their copy by interlarding material from stronger fists. But indeed the following passage seems to us so near the top of prose felicity that we lapse from grace:

In regard to wine, Lamb and myself had the same habit, viz., to take a great deal *during* dinner, none *after* it. Consequently, as Miss Lamb (who drank only water) retired almost with the dinner itself, nothing

remained for men of our principles, the rigour of which we had illustrated by taking rather too much of old port before the cloth was drawn, except talking; amœbean colloquy, or, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, a dialogue of "brisk reciprocation." But this was impossible; over Lamb, at this period of his life, there passed regularly, after taking wine, a brief eclipse of sleep. It descended upon him as softly as a shadow. In a gross person, laden with superfluous flesh, and sleeping heavily, this would have been disagreeable; but in Lamb, thin even to meagreness, spare and wiry as an Arab of the desert or as Thomas Aquinas wasted by scholastic vigils, the affection of sleep seemed rather a network of aerial gossamer than of earthly cobweb—more like a golden haze falling upon him gently from the heavens than a cloud exhaling upwards from the flesh. Motionless in his chair as a bust, breathing so gently as scarcely to seem certainly alive, he presented the image of repose midway between life and death, like the repose of sculpture; and, to one who knew his history, a repose affectingly contrasting with the calamities and internal storms of his life.

De Quincey's essay on Lamb, like so many of the great critiques of the early nineteenth century, was originally written as a book review. We like to imagine what a *Blackwood* or *Edinburgh* reviewer would have said if the editor (in the manner of to-day) had told him to deal with a volume in 500 or 1,000 words. The nineteenth century reviewer took a spacious view of his job. Of this particular

essay, which purported to be a notice of Talfourd's *Final Memorials of Charles Lamb* (1848), De Quincey said (very nobly):

Liberated from this casual office of throwing light upon a book, raised to its grander station of a solemn deposition to the moral capacities of man in conflict with calamity—viewed as a return made into the chanceries of heaven upon an issue directed from that court to try the amount of power lodged in a poor desolate pair of human creatures for facing the very anarchy of storms—this obscure life of the two Lambs, brother and sister (for the two lives were one life), rises into grandeur that is not paralleled once in a generation.

Of course, De Quincey was a celestial kind of reviewer. Not even opium could make most of us write like that. Also he had the right idea about dealing with correspondence and accumulated papers. He used to live in one set of lodgings until the mass of miscellaneous matter filled the room. Then he would move to other quarters, leaving the pile in charge of the landlady. He always took care not to inform her of the new address.

There is a great deal more to be said about this Volume V, but we must skip along. (There is no reason, you know, why you shouldn't look up the book for yourself.) We will just be generous enough to pass on De Quincey's anecdote about how Coleridge first became a great reader. Coleridge,

as a child, was going down the Strand in a day dream, imagining himself swimming the Hellespont. Moving his hands as though swimming, he happened to touch a gentleman's pocket. The latter thought him a young pickpocket. "What! so young and yet so wicked?" The boy, terrified, sobbed a denial, and explained that he had been imagining himself as Leander. The gentleman was so pleased that he gave him a subscription to a circulating library.

The next volume of De Quincey that we intend to study is X, in which we find *Letters to a Young Man Whose Education Has Been Neglected*. We are rather stricken to note that these were addressed to a young man who was exactly the same age as ourself.

The first of these letters was evidently in the nature of a Christmas present to the young gentleman, known to us only as Mr. M. It is dated December 24, 1824. Whether Mr. M. was an actual person and drew this letter from his stocking on Christmas morning we are not informed. Our own conjecture is that he was as mythical as his sister-in-love Miss M., of Walter de la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget*. Somehow there is a humorous lack of reality in the way De Quincey introduces him. Mr. M. is in possession of "great opulence, unclouded reputation, and freedom from unhappy connexions." Also he had "the

priceless blessing of unfluctuating health." And yet he exhibited "a general dejection." This, a young lady of seventeen told De Quincey, "was well known to arise from an unfortunate attachment in early life." But finally De Quincey exhumed the truth. Mr. M. had been defrauded of education. And Mr. M.'s first inquiry is whether at his present age of 32 it would be worth his while to go to college.

No, indeed, is De Quincey's unhesitant reply. Mr. M. would be 12 or 14 years older than his fellow-students, which would make their association "mutually burthensome." And as for the value of college lectures—

These whether public or private, are surely the very worst modes of acquiring any sort of accurate knowledge, and are just as much inferior to a good book on the same subject as that book hastily read aloud, and then immediately withdrawn, would be inferior to the same book left in your possession, and open at any hour to be consulted, retraced, collated, and in the fullest sense studied.

It appears that the dejected young man, despite—or perhaps on account of—his lack of education, nourished a secret desire to be a writer. He had been reading Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, particularly the chapter called *An Affectionate Exhortation to Those Who in Early*

Life Feel Themselves Disposed to Become Authors. According to De Quincey, Mr. M. asks his opinion on Coleridge's views of this topic. Alas! now we are more convinced than ever that Mr. M. is only a phantom: unquestionably De Quincey, the canny super-journalist, wafted him from the opium flagon as an ingenious target for some anti-Coleridge banter. His chaff directed at Coleridge is gorgeous enough. It is double-decked chaff, too, for he not only affectionately twits his fellow opium-eater *in propria persona*, but introduces for discussion an anonymous "eminent living Englishman," who is plainly also Coleridge. He compares C. with Leibnitz for his combination of fine mind with a physique of equine robustness. This passage somehow causes us to chuckle aloud—

They were centaurs—heroic intellects with brutal capacities of body. What partiality in nature! In general a man has reason to think himself well off in the great lottery of this life if he draws the prize of a healthy stomach without a mind; or the prize of a fine intellect with a crazy stomach; but that any man should draw both is truly astonishing.

The first letter concludes with a charmingly humorous discussion of the problem (valid now as then) how a man of letters may get any creative work done and at the same time keep his wife and children happy.

II

Old Bill Barron, up in the composing room, asks us when we are going to take our Vacation. We are taking it now, we reply, reading De Quincey. Certainly we can't imagine why any one with as pleasing a job as ours should have any right to go off on holiday. There are so many people in this town who have to spend their time reading the new books: we are going to enjoy ourself by dipping into the old ones. With one exception. We have found, in the office of the *Literary Review*, and immediately made off with, *L'Extravagante Personnalité de Jacques Casanova*, by Joseph Le Gras (Paris: Bernard Grasset). We read the first sentence—

Emporté dans une berline confortable, dont les coffres sont abondamment pourvus de viandes, de pâtés et de vins; une femme sur les genoux, une autre parfois à ses côtés qui se frotte amoureusement à lui; vêtu de riches vêtements, le jabot et les manchettes enjolivés de fines dentelles, les goussets garnis de montres précieuses, le ventre chatouillé de breloques, les doigts étincelants de bagues, les poches tintant d'or et le mollet caressé dans la soie; réclamant à grand bruit les meilleurs chevaux aux relais, la plus belle chambre dans les auberges, jetant sa bourse à l'hôtelier et repartant au milieu des révérences et des courbettes; tel nous apparaîtrait, en une attitude un peu conventionnelle, l'aventurier Casanova au temps de sa splendeur.

That, of course, is one way of taking a Vacation. We remember, with a small behind-the-arras chuckle, one of Pearsall Smith's *Trivia* called "Lord Arden," which deliciously hits off the buried Casanova in all of us. At any rate, we shall read this book about Extravagant Jack.

But we must get back to De Quincey, or you'll think we are purposely avoiding the topic. We hardly know where to resume our prattle about this glorious creature. Perhaps the first thing to note is an advisable shift in viewpoint. Nowadays we are all introduced to De Quincey at school, so his name comes to us with a peculiar mixture of sublimity and painful awe—for we learn that he was a wicked opium eater. We do not realize that a number of his contemporaries regarded him as a low-down dog of a journalist. Southey, for instance, called him "one of the greatest scoundrels living," and urged Hartley Coleridge to go to Edinburgh with a strong cudgel and give De Quincey a public drubbing as "a base betrayer of the hospitable social hearth." What was the cause of this peevishness? Why, of course, the *Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets*, a book whose social indiscretion is exceeded only by its magnificently fecund humour; told, like all De Quincey's waggishness, with a rich sonorous volubility and luxurious plenitude of verbal skill. There is a subtle wickedness of amusement in the apparent

solemnity of De Quincey's polysyllables. The indignation caused latterly by such books as Margot Asquith's was nothing compared to the anger of the Lake Poets when they found their innocent privacies laid bare by the Opium Eater's pen. The Lakers took themselves as seriously as groups of humanitarians always do. And they were quite right. Francis Thompson complains that Milton never forgot he was Milton—"but we must admit it was worth remembering." Yet the domestic affairs of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey were indeed irresistibly comic. We have not forgotten that Hartley Coleridge, whose childhood was so charmingly enshrined in a poem by Wordsworth—

Thou fairy voyager, that dost float
In such clear water that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream—

also floated in liquids more ruddy. He was removed from his fellowship at Oxford on the charge of drinking too much—which must have been a very great deal in the Oxford of those days.

Reminiscences of the Lake Poets is the kind of book (Boswell's *Tour to the Hebrides* is another) that causes indignation to the victims, but intense delight to posterity. Posterity always has the best

of us, anyhow. The anecdote of Coleridge's father and the protruding shirt has always seemed to us one of the most disgracefully amusing minutiae in literature—and yet even now, after a hundred years of sanctity, we are not sure whether we ought to reprint it. Well, you can buy *Reminiscences of the Lake Poets* in the Everyman Series.

The next thing to be said about De Quincey is that he would have been a glorious editor for one of Mr. Hearst's newspapers. He wrote a good deal better than Mr. Arthur Brisbane; but he had the same acute instinct as to what the public is really interested in. We believe it was James L. Ford who described the Hearstian doctrine of newspaper policy as "Plenty of crime and plenty of underclothes." De Quincey was a glutton for crime. Did you know that he lost his job as editor of the *Westmoreland Gazette* because for sixteen months he filled its columns mainly with news of local lawbreaking? His employers did not appreciate genius. His instinct was absolutely sound. In spite of the disclaimers of refined people, crime news, when written not merely vulgarly but with earnestness and art, is one of the most valuable features of any journal. If we were running a newspaper we would begin by scouring the press clubs for a young De Quincey.

He had, we say, the newspaper man's instinct. Writing of the appalling Williams murders in 1811,

he complains that though the outrage was committed shortly after midnight on Sunday morning, nothing reached the papers until Monday. "To have met the public demand for details on the Sunday, which might so easily have been done by cancelling a couple of dull columns and substituting a circumstantial narrative . . . would have made a small fortune. By proper handbills dispersed through all quarters of the infinite metropolis, 250,000 extra copies might have been sold."

This occurs in the postscript to *Murder as One of the Fine Arts*. In that immortal essay itself the macabre humour and the sledge-hammer impact of irony are probably a bit too grim and a bit (also) too learned and crushing for the gentler sort of reader. But the postscript, dated 1854, is the kind of horrific febrifuge that turns the heart to an Eskimo patty. We suggest that you try reading it aloud to a house party if you want to see blenching and shudders. The ultimate tribute to any writing of the narrative kind is to read it perpetually running ahead, in a horrid tension of eagerness, meanwhile holding one's proper "place" with a finger until one can force the eye back to pursue a methodical course. We ourself read that postscript thus, late at night in a lonely country house; and, by a noble summation of horror, Gissing began to growl and bristle as we reached the climax. We should hate to admit with what paltry

quaverings we went forth into the night, where the trees were smoke-colour in a pallid moonglow, to see what was amiss. It was only a wandering dog prowling about. But for a few moments we had felt certain that our harmless Salamis Estates were thickly ambushed with assassins. It then required a trip to the icebox, and a considerable infare upon a very ammoniac Roquefort cheese, to restore tranquillity.

III

But we were talking about De Quincey. Yesterday was by no means a day wasted, for we got our amiable friend Franklin Abbott into our clutches, made him take a note of *Reminiscences of the English Lake Poets* (in the Everyman Series, we repeat) and insisted to him that for a man of genteel tastes this is one of the most entertaining works ever printed. And also by mere chance, which so often disposes the bright fragments of life into a ruddy and high-spirited pattern, we stopped in at a bookshop on Church Street just to say howdy to the eccentric Raymond Halsey. Happening to remark that it is now just a hundred years since the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* was published, Raymond disappeared with a rabbit-like scuttling motion; was heard digging among shelves at the rear, and returned with the smile of one who thinks he foresees a sale. It was a

first edition of the *Opium Eater* with the magical imprint of Taylor & Hessey. Was there ever a more sacred name among publishers? We don't need to remind you they were Keats's publishers, too. "Only fifty dollars," said Raymond, but it was lunch time and we had to leave.

In the dark rear chamber of a Cedar Street tavern, in that corner underneath the photographs of the Cheshire Cheese, something happened that seemed to us almost as pretty as anything published by the vanished Taylor & Hessey. Frank spied an old friend of his, a fellow Pittsburgher, and the latter halted at our table on his way out. We complimented him upon the fine bronze patina of his countenance, to which he replied that he had been salmon fishing. "You know," he said, "there are only three salmon-flies that I care a continental for," and from his pocket he drew a small pink envelope. With a tender hand he slid its contents onto the board. "There they are," he said. His voice seemed to change. "Dusty Miller, Durham Ranger, and Jock Scott." The little feathery trinkets, glowing with dainty treacheries, lay there on the ale-bleached wood. Certainly it seemed to us there was poetry in that moment. "I go to Bingham, Maine," he said, and drive eighteen miles up the Kennebec." (A small postern door opened gently upon another world.) "Old So-and-so is waiting at the station.

He's always there. I could leave to-night; he'd be sure to be there when the train got in."

We had a perfectly vivid picture of old So-and-so waiting at the Bingham station. Yes, we could see him. Then the postern door closed, gently but definitely, with that strong pneumatic piston that is attached to all our doors.

We were saying, however, that De Quincey's *Reminiscences of the Lake Poets* caused great indignation among the Grasmere coterie. This was due not to any malice in De Quincey's manner of writing, which was affectionate and admiring throughout. It was due to something far more painful than malice—the calm, detailed, candid, and minute dissection of their lives. There was truly something astoundingly clinical in this microscopy. For instance, to take the case of Wordsworth's household, these are some of the comments De Quincey makes:

(1) That Mrs. Wordsworth—whose charm and simplicity he adores—was cross-eyed.

(2) That Dorothy—Wordsworth's sister—was a fervid and noble character, but stammered and was ungraceful.

(3) That Wordsworth's appearance grew less attractive with advancing age.

(4) That his legs were very ill-shapen and "were pointedly condemned by all female connoisseurs in legs." And that his shoulders were drooping and narrow.

(5) "The mouth, and the whole circumjacent features of the mouth, composed the strongest feature in Wordsworth's face." In fact, they reminded De Quincey of Milton.

(6) That he aged very rapidly—when thirty-nine he was taken to be over sixty.

(7) That his brother John, a sea captain, had lost his ship while drunk.

(8) That Wordsworth cannot have been amiable as a child.

(9) That the only time Wordsworth was drunk was as an undergraduate at Cambridge on visiting the rooms once occupied by Milton.

(10) That he had not the temperament ever to be an attractive wooer, and that it was "perplexing" that he had ever married.

(11) That he had had astonishing good luck in financial matters.

(12) That the Wordsworth ménage was excessively plain and severe in simplicity.

(13) That Wordsworth and Southey did not really like each other.

(14) That Wordsworth treated books very barbarously, and used to cut the pages with a butter-smear'd knife.

(15) That Wordsworth's library was meagre and insignificant compared to Southey's.

These are only a few of De Quincey's remarks, digested to their naked gist; by which they lose all the amusing complexity of comment wherein they are folded. But the *précis* will suffice to show that,

whether consciously or not, they were exactly calculated to wound, with very deep incision, the most delicate sensibilities of an austere, somewhat humourless and extremely self-regarding man.

IV

On the 13th of February, 1848, De Quincey received a letter asking him to contribute a writing of some sort for an "album," to be sold at a Ladies' Bazaar. This was to be held in March of that year, for the benefit of the Library of the Glasgow Athenæum, and the ladies begged him to reply by "return of post." This incident in itself sounds contemporary enough to give us a fellow feeling with De Quincey.

He had nothing available to send to the bazaar, but there was one unfailing resource—his bathtub. Let him describe it:

In my study I have a bath, large enough to swim in provided the swimmer, not being an ambitious man, is content with going ahead to the extent of three inches at the utmost. This bath, having been superseded (as regards its original purpose) by a better, has yielded a secondary service to me as a reservoir for my MSS. Filled to the brim it is by papers of all sorts and sizes. Every paper written *by* me, *to* me, *for* me, *of* or *concerning* me, and, finally, *against* me, is to be found, after an impossible search, in this capacious repertory. Those papers, by the way, that come under the last (or hostile)

subdivision are chiefly composed by shoemakers and tailors—an affectionate class of men, who stick by one to the last like pitch-plasters.

De Quincey decided that the only thing to do was to draw something at random from the bathtub for the ladies' album. Accordingly, he made a little ceremony of it. "Three young ladies, haters of everything unfair," were called in as referees; and a young man to do the actual dipping. There were to be four dips into the tub, and, for some reason not quite clear to us, the young man was made to attire himself in a new potato-sack, with holes cut for his legs and only his right arm free. It would have been more to the purpose, we should have thought, to blindfold him; but he was instructed to dip at random, holding his face "at right angles to the bath." He was to be allowed one minute to rummage at random among "the billowy ocean of papers," and at the command *Haul Up!* was to come forth with whatever his fingers approved. Before the ceremony began a glass of wine was brought. De Quincey proposed the health of the ladies of the Athenæum, and pledged his honour that whatever MS. should be dredged up would be sent off to the bazaar. And this, he protested, though somewhere buried in the bath there lay a paper which he valued as equal to the half of his possessions.

But he was compelled to depart from the strict rigour of his scheme. For let us see what the young man discovered in the bathtub. The first dip brought up a letter still unopened. It proved to be a dinner invitation for the 15th of February. De Quincey was congratulating himself on the success of his raffle, which had thus enabled him to answer this letter without irreparable breach of manners, when the young lady referees discovered that the letter was four years old.

Number 2 was a "dun." The young man was, to De Quincey's dismay, dredging in a portion of the tub rich in overdue bills. "It is true," he says, "that I had myself long remarked that part of the channel to be dangerously infested with duns. In searching for literary or philosophic paper, it would often happen for an hour together that I brought up little else than variegated specimens of the dun." And so Number 3 was also a dun.

Number 4 turned out "a lecture addressed to myself by an ultra-moral friend—a lecture on procrastination, and not badly written." And this also De Quincey refused to allow to be sent to the Athenæum. So everything hinged on the fifth and extra dip, which was committed to one of the young ladies. She blushed rosily (De Quincey assures us) at the responsibility, and earnestly "ploitered" among the papers for full five minutes. "She contended that she knew, by intuition, the

sort of paper on which duns were written: and, whatever else might come up, she was resolved it should not be a dun." "Don't be too sure," said De Quincey; but when the paper was finally drawn out it was a blank sheet.

This, the referees maintained, was a judgment on De Quincey, and meant that he should use the empty page to begin a new and original contribution for the ladies of Glasgow. Which he did, and turned out a little essay, suggested by their recent sport, on *Sortilege and Astrology*. We have tried to read it, but so far without success.

We are interested to note that others besides ourself have been turning back to De Quincey. In a recent *Fortnightly Review* there is an article by H. M. Paull, sound enough in its observations, but grievously lacking in style. Mr. Paull, moreover, seems to us to shoot too far when he says that "to modern readers De Quincey's efforts to be sprightly only cause annoyance." It is true that sometimes his astonishing verbosity and his passion for footnotes outrun a hasty temper; but for our part we find something notably odd and agreeable in his queer, preposterous humour. His habit of calling great men familiarly by their first names—Doctor Johnson is "Sam," and even the learned and ancient Josephus becomes "Joe," and Thomas à Kempis "Tom"—is deplored by Mr. Paull; but this habit, we fear, has been inherited

by columnists, and we had better not defend it too vigorously. The bathtub anecdote, which we have pared down until it loses most of its gusto, is, in the original, not devoid of humour. (Volume XIII of the collected works.)

And De Quincey's ramified and rambling way of narrative offers surprising delights in unexpected parentheses. For instance, in the *Opium Eater* he happens to mention a murder that had been committed on Hounslow Heath. "The name of the murdered person was Steele, and he was the owner of a lavender plantation in that neighbourhood." A lavender plantation! There is a fragrant circumstance for the mind of a poet to dwell on. Think of the chance immortality of the unlucky Steele—deathless now, because (poor devil) he was murdered and had a lavender plantation.

THE SPANISH SULTRY

TURNING up masterpieces of unintentional humour is a pleasant diversion of most writers. Everyone has his own favourites—on this side Atlantic many students vouch for *The Balsam Groves of Grandfather Mountain* (by Shepherd M. Dugger) as the most amusing book written in America; in Britain a few diligent explorers beat the drum for *Irene Iddesleigh*, a novel written by Mrs. Amanda McKittrick Ros (of Belfast). Neither of these books, unhappily, is easy to lay hand upon. But as a possible competitor, how do you like *The Spanish Sultry*, by Ambrose Dargason (Harrisburg, 1905)? We have no copy, but once we took down some extracts.

Mr. Dargason's hero was a window-glass merchant "whose nature was as transparent and reflective as the goods he throve in." This merchant's name was Wilbert Vocks; after his retirement from merchandise he spent his time in travelling about looking for a suitable wife to inherit his fortune. Unhappily, his inherent caution always caused him to sheer off just when the

reader was expecting the happy nuptials. The scene on the park bench in Harrisburg, one moony evening, is a favourite of ours:

In the anæmic brightness of the crescendo moon Frederica's eyes were gilded with the splendor of her sex's softest charms. They were frosted bulbs of allure, and Wilbert trenched delicately upon her French-shod toes as a symbol of hardy waxing tenderness.

"Oh, Mr. Vocks," said she, the beautiful coamings of her orbs brimming over with cheer, "how many equinoxes will hereafter wax and wane, search through this garden, but for one in vain."

"You are quoting the Rubaiyat," said he, "but with indifferent adhesion to the text."

"Adhesion," she replied, "was never one of my frailties," and a trifle peaked [sic] withdrew to the distant angle of the iron settee.

Wilbert's momentary harshness had already dissipated and he regretted this intrusion of pedantic nicety upon the moonlit promise of their double entente. "I bespeak a rapproachment," he gallantly murmured and, sliding deftly along the parallel rods of metal subforming the trysting bench, found himself chilled by coming en rapport with a section of the seat not warmed by humane contact.

"But you must not reproach me," she taunted shyly. "It is too plain that you were not brought up in Harrisburg, where men speak chivalrously to women and good breeding is a native filament of the tender air."

"Probably you are cold on that hitherto unfrequented segment of iron slatting," he said, shrivelling his inward

tremolo by an affection of stern brusque. "Why not slide over this way a little, and chivalry commends my sheltering you from the sharp fidgetings of frost which, however commendable to coal dealers, betray the softer passions to gooseflesh and eventual snivel."

Womanly, without further quibble, she responded, and the beauty of that unsophisticated face was shielded soon from external examination by the protective polygon of his arm and elbow. It was a generous moment, and in harmony with all the higher laws of human sentiment.

The delighted reader might be pardoned for thinking that in this idyllic scene the restless affections of Mr. Vocks had found satisfaction. But Frederica, after several evenings of intellectual interchange, proved too shallow for his deep-laden mind. As Mr. Dargason put it (his taste for oddly mixed nautical metaphors was rather extreme):

He grounded upon the shoals of her mentality and, after striving vainly to warp off into deeper areas of thought and sentiment, was forced to broach his cargo of affection upon the outgoing tides. Only thus, by careening and jettisoning his rich hatches of emotional freight, and scudding forth under bare poles and jury rigging, was he able to win clear to the open sea of freedom, escaping the lee shores of an uncongenial union. The bright occulting lamps of her eyes shone like desperate beacons, but he remembered that lighthouses are intended not to allure the cautious mariner, but to

warn him away. He reefed his binnacle gravely, and with only an aching heart throbbing in the empty hatches of his personality determined henceforward to steer by the unquestionable stars of intuition. Her soundings were too easily fathomed. In a word, she was not deep enough.

To quiet his melancholy, Mr. Vocks returns into the busy world of trade. We have not space for very full quotation, but his discussion with his business associates is worth a brief extract:

As surely as my name is Wilbert Vocks (he said), I intend that this business shall be conducted in accord with all principles of integrity and without demurrage to trickery. I have been allowed by fortune to make a frugal and circumstantial inspection of the general laws and accidents of life, and it is my conviction that by exploring the estuaries of remorse no bill of lading was ever brought to consummation. My rudder is uncompromisingly turned to the favouring gales of expedience, and we will sail a vigorous course into the latitudes of magnetism.

In this admirable resolution Mr. Vocks was strengthened by his partner (Mr. Henry Shingle), who is described as "a thrifty man the colour of a glass of light beer, bleached brown by an open-air youth in Monongahela County, but surmounted spiritually by the bright bubbles of aspiration and elasticity. His clothes were neat and his habits

orderly; of his meditative components it is not necessary to surmise. He had not made a habit of thinking profoundly, for he knew that any thought he might have could easily be rebutted by more carefully trained men; therefore he spared himself the embarrassment of argument. His management of the Sales Department, however, was not to be criticized."

Dargason is always at his best when examining the undulations and sinuosities of temperament in his female characters. Some of Henry Shingle's melancholia is explained when we learn of his wife that "some of her meditations were unmatronly in the extreme." But you must know Mrs. Shingle better:

Mrs. Henry Shingle, unusual among ladies of Monongahela County in being unquestionably a person of specific appeal toward unconscientious gentry, had nevertheless made a loyal Presbyterian struggle against the disorderly suggestions bequeathed to her powerful bosom by an ancestry which had been spasmodic and illicit. So she was a person of aliquot parts, her mind was often troubled by froward imaginations, but she rarely uttered words to that effect. Little ripples of vulgarity ran through her intellect, which in a writer of fiction would have been profitable no doubt, but with womanly prudence she did not reveal these regrets to the other mourners, but pickled them whole in the dark brine of matronly reservation. The deceased would have been surprised, perhaps even pleased, now that he was done

with such perplexities, to know how unmatronly her meditations were with regard to his truncated career. But she was obsequious in the extreme, no one at the funeral gave a better emphasis of sorrow, and hove to among gusts of female hysteria she rode upon the anchor of what certainly looked like a stalwart faith. Henry knew better, but like the business man he was he said nothing.

Many of her troubles no doubt were caused by faulty circulation, certainly her husband had been embittered by the extreme chill of her extremities, the whole of her system as she called it, though too unexpected in some respects for the scientific word, from the knees downward, was frequently obsessed by strong venous chills which contracted the palms of her feet. She complained like the old king in the Bible of this, they were as cold as ice, nor did the old king's remedy appeal to her as at all liable to prove efficient; besides the virgins of Monongahela County, she at any rate supposed, were long since asleep at this hour of the night. There was nothing to be done but complain to her husband, which she was prompt to do, but he, sombre with accretions of woe, paid too impersonal heed to her anxieties. Disregarding the anguish of those womanly rondures and chilled extremes he merely remarked "Why don't you get out another blanket?" and went down cellar to open the draught of the furnace.

We wish we had taken the trouble to copy out more of *The Spanish Sultry* while we were about it. The Sultry herself was the lady to whom Mr. Vocks finally succumbed: she caused the fracture

of the window-glass business. As the author put it: "Hers was not the clear transparence of Mr. Vocks's glassy nature; she was stained with violent and ominous colours, and through the panes of her vehement character there burst downpours of scarlet and lavender trouble."

THE STORY OF GINGER CUBES

I

[A letter from the Proprietor of the Ginger Cubes to his Advertising Manager, who is ill in hospital.]

DEAR RUSSELL: When I heard that you had been taken to the hospital with a badly dislocated sense of proportion and exhaustion of the adjective secretions, I was worried. The doctor said that you were suffering from a severe attack of deprecation and under-statement, and I feared that would mean you would be quite unfit to help me in the forthcoming campaign for Ginger Cubes. But I hear now that a few weeks of silence and relaxation will bring you round. I have ordered the *Police Gazette* and *The Nation* to be sent you. Each in its own way is highly entertaining.

In our last conference, just before you were taken ill, you tried with your usual energy and bullheaded vitality to persuade me to say a word about the Ginger Cubes at the Paperhangers Convention. You made a great deal of the point that this would be a vast gathering, and that it

would be excellent business for me to give them a "message."

I ask you to meditate this thought: give me a small group of folks who are more or less interested in the same sort of thing that I am, and I will "talk my head off." But speaking to large, miscellaneous audiences, many of whom are only incubating there to pass away the time until the theatres open, is my idea of loss of compression.

We have appropriated a fine promotion budget for the Ginger Cubes, but I am holding up any action until I can argue the situation with you. About newspaper advertising, for instance—I want your opinion as to the papers which are read (1) most carefully, (2) by the class of people to whom the Ginger Cubes are likely to appeal, (3) at the time of day when their minds (and palates) are receptive—i.e., morning or evening? For instance, do you think that people will be likely to be tempted by the Cubes in the morning, just after breakfast? I think not. I believe that the evening, in that faintness and debility that are supposed to attack office-workers on their way home (especially in the subway) is the psychological zero hour for the Ginger Cubes.

Miss Balboa, to whom I am dictating this, says that she never noticed any sign of weakness or lack of energy in the evening rush on the subway. I believe it is worth while to get the feminine

reaction on this matter before we make any decisions. One thing I have always regretted about you as an Advertising Manager is that you are not married. Wives are often very helpful in these questions of merchandising strategy. But perhaps you can question some of the nurses at the hospital and get their reaction.

In regard to these mediums, the question of circulation does not cut any ice in my cynical and querulous mind. It is not a matter of circulation, but of penetration, that excites me.

The chemical laboratory reports that the Cubes will positively have a soothing and tonic effect upon the digestive organs, and that we are justified in saying so. Unfortunately they say that the Cubes cannot possibly be of any value in combating "pyorrhea," so we cannot go riding on the other folks' toothpaste copy. For your amusement, I have thought up this slogan:

<p>WHY NOT INVEST IN A NEW INTESTINE? TRY GINGER CUBES</p>
--

Which is probably too startling. But anyhow, when we have decided, I wish our copy to be

Cumulative, Concise, and Continuous. Then, ho
for the Ginger Cubes!

Yours,

NICHOLAS RIBSTONE,

President The Ginger Cubes Corporation.

N.R./D.B.

II

*[A letter from the Proprietor of the Ginger Cubes to
his Advertising Manager, who is ill in hospital.]*

DEAR RUSSELL: I am glad to hear from Dr. Nichevo that you are doing well. He reports that in your delirium you had visions of nothing but full page insertions, so I realize that you must have been a very sick man. I am glad you are coming out of it. The Doctor says that a little quiet meditation on business problems will help to bring you back to "normalcy."

So you might think this over. I have just been telling the boys at our conference this morning that I want our advertising matter for the Ginger Cubes to be distinguished. I've been much impressed, for instance, by those ads that Childs restaurants have been running for some time, in which they make use of historians, philosophers, poets, and what not, to introduce the topic of food. I am wondering whether, in your extensive reading, you have come across any literature in which Ginger or Cubes have been written about

in a pleasing, sentimental strain? Miss Balboa thinks that Shakespeare said something about Ginger being "hot in the mouth," but I am a little afraid of that word hot. How about

THESE CUBES FROM THE SOUTH
ARE WARM IN THE MOUTH

What I want you to do is tell me what the resources of literature are in the way of quotations about Ginger.

Some of the boys are much taken by a suggestion that has come in from the Gray Matter Advertising Agency, who somehow got wind of our plans. Mr. Gray, the Psychology Director of Gray Matter Agency, wants us to mark the cubes with little spots of white sugar, so that they look like dice. Here's the joker: he wants us to pack them in little boxes in which half the cubes will be marked as five-spots and half as deuces, using the slogan, They Always Turn Up Seven.

That seems to me a bit complicated, but I must admit that I'm rather struck by the idea of advertising the Cubes as Digestive Dice. I'm having the idea of marking them with sugar spots looked into, to see what it will cost. I visualize a subway

poster showing the cubes tumbling out of a dice shaker, with the words Throw These for Good Health. Do you think that is too distinctly masculine an appeal? But think of getting this idea across to the lunching public, of always carrying a box of the Ginger Cubes in their vest pocket (we could have the box shaped like a little dice-shaker, hey?), they can use them to throw for who is to pay the check, and then eat them. Can you put that thought in twelve words?

What a pity that neither of us is married, and has no wife to fall back on for advice in this delicate matter. Miss Balboa, my new stenographer, thinks that women would not be attracted by this gambling note; she says that women are born Dutch-treaters, and do not fall for the idea of settling the lunch-check by mere chance. Please see what the hospital nurses think about this.

This man Gray, from the Gray Matter Agency, is a whirlwind. He has shot in some suggestive layouts for car cards that make my head spin. These are some of his aspirations—

DIGESTIVE DICE
MEAN LUCK FOR THE LIVER
TRY GINGER CUBES

THE STORY OF GINGER CUBES

FOR A CHEW IN THE TUBES
CHOOSE GINGER CUBES

And he has doped out a map showing the whole digestive apparatus laid out like a subway system, and the Ginger Cubes keep traffic moving.

All this seems to me a bit too unconventional, although I confess I am amused by the originality. Tell me what your reaction is. I'm sending you some of the Cubes to distribute among the nurses.

Yours,

NICHOLAS RIBSTONE,

President The Ginger Cubes Corporation.
N.R./D.B.

III

[A letter from Miss Candida Cumnor, one of the nurses of the Hippocrates Hospital, to Mr. Nicholas Ribstone, President of the Ginger Cubes Corporation.]

DEAR MR. RIBSTONE: Poor Mr. Russell is still very weak, and has not been able to write to you himself. Dr. Nichevo says that he has never seen a more interesting case of complete exhaustion of the salesmanship glands. He thinks that the patient must have been under a very severe strain for a long time preceding the breakdown. I gathered from what Mr. Russell said in his period of delirium that he had been trying to sell by mail

order a complete set of Tolstoy's works, but by some mistake had bought the wrong mailing list from one of the houses that deal in such things. They gave him a list of members of the Ku Klux Klan, and the returns on his effort were so disheartening that it broke him all up. He was very queer for a while. But one delusion helped a great deal. He had a fixed idea that the temperature chart at the end of his bed was a sales graph, and the more peaks there were in it the better he was pleased, for he thought that at last the K. K. K. were beginning to fall for Tolstoy.

At any rate, he is much better now, and asks me to write to you for him. I must say that I think you picked a fine Advertising Manager for your Ginger Cubes: I have never seen such an enthusiastic fellow. The specimen drawings or car cards that you sent him are pinned up on a screen beside the bed, and he hardly takes his eyes off them. He has had all the nurses in the ward munching the Ginger Cubes, or Digestive Dice as he likes to call them, and is asking me to make a note of their opinions. He says he plans an interesting lay-out under the caption

COMMENTS OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION
ON THE GINGER CUBES

I must admit that I find the Cubes very tasty and refreshing.

To show you that he is really picking up, I will tell you that this morning he asked me to send out to the nearest newsstand for a number of magazines and papers, which he has been looking through with close attention.

But I must not deceive you. In spite of his enthusiasm he is still very weak, and it will take a lot of building up before his merchandising centres are up to par. It would do no harm if you were to send him some stimulating books to read, such as Orison Swett Marden or Dr. Crane.

By the way, Mr. Ribstone, someone in your office has made a mistake in addressing letters to this hospital, the name of which is not Hypocrites but Hippocrates; the spelling is nearly the same but the pronunciation is different, after the name of a famous doctor of old times. Now I must draw to an end, for the patient needs attention; this is a long letter but he wanted you to know all about him.

Yours sincerely,
CANDIDA CUMNOR.

IV

[*A telegram from the National Drug Novelties Company to Nicholas Ribstone.*]

Chicago, April 11, 1922.

Hear interesting rumour about new lozenge ginger cubes to be marketed by you would you

consider entrance of outside capital in this venture or sell outright trade name formula and goodwill believe you have a winner.

EDWARD GARTENBAUM,
President National Drug Novelties.

V

[A telegram from Nicholas Ribstone, president of the Ginger Cubes Corporation, to Edward Gartenbaum of the National Drug Novelties Company.]

Decline discuss selling interest in ginger cubes distribution plans perfected watch our smoke.

RIBSTONE.

VI

[A memorandum sent to heads of departments of the National Drug Novelties Company, Chicago.]

OFFICE BULLETIN No. 38946 (Series B).

Minutes of Conference Held in Directors' Room,
April 12.

Mr. Gartenbaum reported that he had had a telegram from Ribstone declining assistance in financing the Ginger Cubes. Mr. Gartenbaum thought the matter important enough to warrant calling the directors together. Was it possible that Ribstone had access to new sources of capital hitherto unemployed in the drug trade? This

seemed unlikely in view of their own recent canvass. Mr. G. asked Mr. O'Keefe, who had just come back from New York, whether he had been able to find out anything definite about the plans for Ginger Cubes.

Mr. O'Keefe said that he had found the trade greatly interested in the rumours that had been current. It was said everywhere that Ribstone had got hold of a formula that was a knockout, and that the Ginger Cubes had caused more talk in pharmacist and confectionery circles than anything since the Smith Brothers sold their razors. He had not been able to get any very definite dope about the distribution plans, but it was common talk that Ribstone intended to spend half a million in the New York newspapers. He had heard that the Gray Matter Advertising Agency was to handle the account. Mr. O'Keefe said that Mr. Gray was an old friend of his, but going to Gray's office to inquire he found the reception room so choked with solicitors from the newspapers that he did not wait.

Mr. Oldham asked if this man Ribstone had had previous experience in the drug specialty line which would warrant their believing he could make a go of the so-called Ginger Cubes.

Mr. Gartenbaum said that Ribstone had had no experience in that field, so far as he knew, but that he was a very clever merchandiser and had

done big things with the Ribstone Memory Course several years ago.

Professor Devonshire of the laboratory department was called upon to ask if he had any idea what the formula of the Ginger Cubes might be, and whether it could be easily duplicated or improved. Professor Devonshire said that, speaking as a chemist, ginger had many possibilities as a popular drug staple, that its principal constituents are starch, volatile oil, and resin; that it has carminative and purgative values, especially for dyspepsia and flatulence, and is helpful for seasickness, headache, and toothache. He said that as soon as the Cubes themselves were on the market he could analyze them and suggest a variation in the formula.

Mr. O'Keefe said that he had tried to get hold of some of the Cubes, but that they were being carefully kept under cover. He believed that Ribstone's plans were still in the air until his advertising man, Russell, was out of hospital.

Mr. Gartenbaum asked if Mr. Russell was in hospital because he had been trying some of the Ginger Cubes.

Mr. Oldham said that he had been greatly impressed by the amount of gossip in the trade about the Ginger Cubes, but he believed the value of the thing lay not in any unique formula but in the cleverness of the name Ginger Cubes,

and particularly the additional name Digestive Dice.

Mr. Gartenbaum agreed and submitted it to the meeting that it would be well worth while to ride on Ribstone's effort by putting out a similar product with an equally catchy name. He instanced the way Eskimo Pie was followed immediately by a dozen imitations, all very nearly as successful.

Mr. Sombre of the Promotion Department asked if Mr. Gartenbaum had thought of any name as appealing as Ginger Cubes.

Mr. Gartenbaum admitted he hadn't, but said that his mind was working on this matter and the only thing he had thought of so far was Ginger Blocks.

Mr. Sombre said he thought that was too similar to Ginger Cubes and might mean legal proceedings.

Mr. O'Keefe suggested Tingling Squares.

After a good deal of discussion, Mr. Gartenbaum adjourned the meeting, ordering these minutes to be sent confidentially to heads of departments. Another conference to be held tomorrow at which suggestions for a rival name would be brought in.

BY E. K. R.,
Stenographer.

VII

[A letter from Allan Russell, Advertising Manager of the Ginger Cubes Corporation, to Nicholas Ribstone.]

Hippocrates Hospital, April 14.

DEAR BOSS, I'm still a bit seedy but am getting better every minute thanks to the care these "good people" have taken of me. This is my first letter and it will have to be short. Just wanted to say that if you still need an assistant in the office I'd like to recommend Miss Cumnor, one of the nurses here, who has been taking care of me. She is tired of the nursing job and wants to get into a "business position." Certainly she's a mighty capable girl and her medical knowledge would be of great value to us in marketing the Cubes. She is 23 years old and ambitious.

I'll be out of here pretty soon now, I hope, and am keen to get into the thick of the fight for the good old Cubes.

Yours always

RUSSELL.

VIII

[A letter from Nicholas Ribstone to Allan Russell.]

Ginger Cubes Corporation

Nicholas Ribstone,
President,
Theodore Carbo,
Vice-President,
Arthur MacCready,
Treasurer,
Simon Haggard,
Secretary,
Allan Russell,
Advertising Mgr.

Executive Offices
2216 Duane Street
New York

Cable Address:
Gincubes

April 14, 1922.

DEAR RUSSELL: Here are our letterheads. How do you like them? I am sending some to the hospital so you can use them for any letters you may need to write. Show them to the nurses and get their reaction. The more they circulate, the better.

This is just to tell you that I am going out of town for a little rest over the week-end. We have got things pretty well lined up so far. I shall be glad when you get back so we can visit together for I want your advice. You understand advertising men better than I do, I guess. To me, a great deal of their jargon is a mystery. What, for instance, do you think of the enclosed one that has just come to me from the Gray Matter Agency? Does it mean anything?

Miss Balboa, by the way, is somewhat upset by

a remark made by your Miss Cumnor, about our error in spelling the name of the Hospital. I'm afraid the mistake was due to my wrong pronunciation, which she misunderstood.

As ever,

NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.

N.R./D.B.

(Encl.)

IX

[Enclosure, sent by Mr. Ribstone to Mr. Russell, being a letter from the Gray Matter Advertising Agency.]

MY DEAR MR. RIBSTONE: Obviously you intend, ultimately at any rate, to have a nation-wide, or even world-wide, distribution for the Ginger Cubes. You are going to need a large merchandising staff. I wish to enlist your interest in our newly created Department of Salesmanizing. Let us train your representatives before they go on the road, and instil into the personnel just those qualities of enthusiasm and confidence that go to make not mere salesmen, but Ambassadors of Commerce.

I solicit the pleasure of convincing you on this topic; in the meantime let me briefly state the nutshell of our theory.

In our Salesmanizing School, which is really a kind of Graduate College of the Selling Arts, we

THE STORY OF GINGER CUBES

seek to drive out from the student all negative and minus thoughts, ideas of possible failure, business depression, etc., and to substitute robust energizing concepts, positive and plus in their nature. Many a man has come to us doubtful about his own selling abilities, doubtful about the general condition of trade, doubtful about economics and literature and even theology. When they leave us, after a three weeks' course under Mr. Harvey K. Tidaholm, they have pronounced convictions.

You wish to have your product—the Ginger Cubes—marketed swiftly, cleanly, universally. There are four steps in this process. The commodity must be

- (1) Institutionalized
- (2) Publicized
- (3) Distributionized
- (4) Internationalized

To bring this about, your representative personnel must be

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| (a) Humanized | } = SALESMANIZED |
| (b) Stabilized | |
| (c) Energized | |

It is on such matters as these that Consumer Preference and Dealer Convictionability are based.

I should like very much to have our Mr. Harvey K. Tidaholm discuss this matter with you. I know that your reaction will be enthusiastic.

Yours faithfully,

GEO. W. GRAY,

Technical Director, Gray Matter Advertising Service.

X

[*A letter from Nicholas Ribstone to George W. Gray.*]

DEAR MR. GRAY: I am just leaving town for a few days rest. All decisions have been postponed until my advertising manager returns. He is now hospitalized. I will confer with you as soon as I am reurbanized.

Yours truly,

(Signed, in absence, with rubber stamp.)

NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.

N.R./D.B.

XI

[*An article in LOZENGE AND PASTILLE, the weekly trade journal of the throat tablet trade.*]

THE VALUE OF THE CUBICAL FORM FOR MEDICATED CANDIES

BY BEN F. MENTHOL,

Secretary of National Lozenge Men's Chamber of Commerce.

A great deal of talk has been roused in lozenge circles by the formation of the Ginger Cubes

Corporation, to manufacture and distribute a new product called the Ginger Cubes. Mr. Nicholas Ribstone, the head of the enterprise, while reticent as to details, admits that he hopes to spring a surprise on the world of bronchial tablets and breath-perfumers. We understand that the Ginger Cubes, while more in the general nature of a confection than a medical preparation, are based on a careful pharmacal formula, and will go before the public on an appeal at least partly therapeutic.

But what interests us is, that Mr. Ribstone's venture again brings up the necessity of standardizing the shape of the medicated sweet, if lozenge men are ever to get back to genuine prosperity. At present the lozenge and jujube world is in a state of wild disorder and lack of intelligent co-operation. Post-war deflation has not been followed by anything constructive. Lozenge men are cutting one another's throats instead of healing the public's. Mr. Ribstone, unconsciously, has put his finger on a vital spot in the lozenge industry.

Hitherto the trade has manufactured its products mainly in four shapes:

- (1) Square tablet
- (2) Round tablet
- (3) Spherical
- (4) Oval

It will be evident, however, that for close packing and neat appearance, the cube is undoubtedly an attractive shape. It is well worth consideration on the part of the trade whether a general adoption of the cube would not be advantageous. Moreover, a great economy could be effected by standardizing cartons and containers. How can the present debilitating fluctuations be ironed out while the whole industry is proceeding on a basis of mere individualism? We do not wish to disparage competition, which is the life of trade, but to advocate a higher form of coöperating competition. The lozenge trade owes it as a duty to humanity to take its part in the general stabilizing and soothing movement. The inflamed throat of Commerce can never be healed until lozenge men get together. There is no reason why the breath-sweetener clique should be so jealous of the digestive wing, both suspicious of larynx and bronchial men. We hope that at the convention in June these matters can be taken up and constructively dealt with.

XII

[A letter from Mr. Gray of the Gray Matter Advertising Agency to Nicholas Ribstone, proprietor of the Ginger Cubes.]

MY DEAR MR. RIBSTONE: I do not wish to seem too insistent, but I am so interested in the success

of the Ginger Cubes that I feel it is my duty to inform you of the tested methods in which prosperity has been attained by other manufacturers.

I am so confident of your eventually deciding to place your advertising account in our hands that I went ahead last week and had our Laboratory of Merchandising Survey conduct a preliminary clinic in the local field. Of course, you understand that you are not obligated in any way; but I felt that this was the most useful mode of helping you to envisage your problem.

Just a word about our Merchandising Survey work, which is headed by Mr. Henry W. Geniall. Mr. Geniall is a man who knows how to talk to dealers in their own language; he is a born sales engineer. He began selling in 1892 and has never stopped; though now he sells service instead of commodities. He is the author of a book which has run through fifteen editions, including the Scandinavian, entitled *How to Meet and Dominate Your Fellow Men*, an autographed copy of which I am having forwarded to you.

The principle of our Merchandising Survey is to conduct a preliminary investigation of markets, in a representative field and on the highest plane of detached observation. Our Merchandising Surveyors are not to be confused with the street men employed by the less professional agencies. Most of them are college graduates; they are so

tactful and genteel that they are welcomed by the dealers as valuable counsellors and coöperators; very often they are asked to stay to supper.

The survey we conducted shows conclusively that there is going to be a big market for Ginger Cubes if they are well publicized. We drew up the inclosed printed blank and questionnaired 100 druggists in the uptown section, just as a preliminary test. I have selected the inclosed at random from the returns, to show you the kind of thing. The others are being bound in a folder, which I will have much pleasure to lay before you on your return to the office, together with a tabulated analysis.

It is a pleasure to be able to put at your disposal all the resources of Gray Matter Service.

Faithfully yours,

GEO. W. GRAY.

Technical Director, Gray Matter Advertising Service.

XIII

[Confidential Report of an interview with a druggist by a Merchandising Surveyor from the Gray Matter Advertising Agency.]

INTERVIEW

Name—Higgly-Piggly Drug Store.

Address—673 Sunnyside Ave.

Type of Store—Chain.

Party Interviewed—J. K. Liquorice, Mgr.

Subject of Interview—Ginger Cubes Canvass.

Approach talk Used—General Coöperation No. 3,
as per Mr. Genial's suggestion.

What Brands of the following Does Dealer Sell—
(List in order of popularity):

Throat Tablets—Roko, Southern Soothers,
Tussicules.

Cough Drops—Lady Larynx, Lotos Cone.

Confectionery Laxatives—Sugar Chew, Cas-
carilla.

Appetizer Lozenges—Paprika Pastilles, Curli-
cues.

Digestive Tablets—Stowaways, Cul de Sacs.

Medicated Candies—Sweeto, Spicy Chiplets,
Candoids.

Breath Purifiers—Balmozone, Pineapple
Hints, Clover Slices.

*To What Does Dealer Attribute Success of These
Best Sellers?* Newspaper Advertising.

*Does He Push Any Particular Brands? If so,
Which?* No Answer.

*What Methods of Manufacturers' Promotion
Produces Best Result for the Dealer?* Newspaper
Advertising.

What per cent. of his customers suffer from Sore Throat? Ten per cent. in winter.

What per cent. from bad digestion? No answer.

What per cent. from cacopneumonia (bad breath)?
No answer.

What per cent. prefer a doctor's prescription to a patent medicine? Fifty per cent.

What Does Dealer think of prospects of Ginger Cubes? Excellent; thinks name very "catchy."

Does Dealer approve the subtitle "Digestive Dice"? Yes.

Will He Use Window Display Material? Sure.

General Remarks—Dealer suggests we investigate what effect the Ginger Cubes will have on smokers' tongue; says ginger bites the tongue after smoking, would not have percentage of ginger too powerful.

Name of Surveyor—Richmond Brown.

Analyzed by Henry W. Geniall.

XIV

[*A letter from Allan Russell, Advertising Manager of the Ginger Cubes Corporation, to his employer, Mr. Nicholas Ribstone.*]

Hippocrates Hospital, April 18.

DEAR BOSS: This is just to say that I am so much better I expect to get out of here in a few days, and hope to be back "on the job" next

week. Dr. Nichevo says that I have made surprising progress and thinks it is due to Miss Cumnor's fine care. She is certainly some nurse. She and I have gone over those papers you sent me, from the Gray Matter people, very carefully. Miss Cumnor's reaction is that we ought to go slow about signing up with them. She thinks, and I am inclined to agree with her, that they talk tripe. By the way, you didn't reply to my suggestion about our giving her a job in the office. She is certainly a remarkable woman.

Yours always,
RUSSELL.

XV

[A letter from Mr. Nicholas Ribstone to his secretary, Miss Daisy Balboa.]

Kill Kare Kountry Klub,
Wayanda, Conn., April 18.

DEAR MISS BALBOA: I have decided to stay here a few days longer for the fishing. Nothing much can be done in the office until Mr. Russell returns, and it just happens that one of the big drug jobbers is staying at this place and it will do no harm for me to get to know him in a social way. Thanks for telling me about the Gray Matter portfolio. I am interested to know that you are impressed by their enthusiasm. But every one is enthusiastic when they go out fishing for a big one.

Look here, instead of mailing the Gray Matter stuff, why not run up here with it yourself? I will get you a reservation at the Bonhomie Inn, which is near this club, and then we can go over the papers together. There's a train that leaves Grand Central at 4:20. The little change would do you good, and there are several matters on which I wish to get your reaction.

Sincerely yours,
NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.

XVI

[A letter from Miss Balboa to Mr. Russell.]

DEAR MR. RUSSELL: Mr. Ribstone is still away, but I am going up to the country this afternoon to take him some papers, including your letter of yesterday. We'll all be mighty glad to see you when you get back.

Faithfully yours,
DAISY BALBOA.

XVII

[A letter from Mr. Gray, of Gray Matter Service, to Mr. Ribstone, proprietor of the Ginger Cubes.]

MY DEAR MR. RIBSTONE: I was glad to get your note from Kill Kare Kountry Klub, and to hear that you have been taking a few days' recreation. You will return, I am confident, much re-

freshed and eager to take up the problems that confront us.

I have been a little disappointed at not getting a definite authorization from you to go ahead with our plans. We have had tentative advances from other possible clients in this same general field, but I have put them off, desiring not to take on any accounts that might possibly conflict with the Ginger Cubes. To be perfectly frank, the thing that has appealed to me about Ginger Cubes is the bully opportunity for public service in a big way, and the chance to institutionalize a product whose possibilities have filled the members of our organization with unusual enthusiasm.

Ever since we first began talking institutional advertising for Ginger Cubes, a real thought impression has been epitomizing itself in my mind, and our Department of Cumulative Service has been giving the matter special study and analytical constructive investigation. We have been going right back to fundamentals on this proposition, studying the different sides of the problem along all its different angles. It will indeed be a source of satisfaction if we are accorded the opportunity to work with you. Our Mr. Geniall was saying in conference yesterday, "I am convinced I would rather be associated with the Ginger Cubes Corporation than any other company I know of, because what I have heard of the

quality of men that make up that organization and the quality of service they would expect convinces me it would be an educative experience to coöperate with that firm. The product-attributes of their Ginger Cubes fill me with enthusiasm, and I feel that if they were our clients we could work for them as personal friends, and not in any cold-blooded businesslike fashion."

That is the way we want you, Mr. Ribstone, to feel towards our organization.

It is not our desire to merely build a number of advertisements which may be combined together in a more or less connected series by some such device as art treatment. Art is all very well as a handmaiden of advertising, but for a monumental campaign you need the inspiration of a Big Idea, a genuinely dominating thought that will clarionize every piece of copy and tie the whole together in a culminating increment of public consciousness.

Advertising is either Product-Advertising or Institutional-Advertising. The functions of the first are obvious—

A. Function is to sell product

B. Means of accomplishment are

- (1) Directly presenting the product to the market
- (2) Urging the market to accept the product

But Institutional-Advertising is far more psychological. Here enters the supreme function of the merchandising arts, to create consumer "goodwill." This may be defined as encouraging consumer-benevolence, that is, educating the public to a sense of subjective interest in the entire business, and a conscious awareness of benefit therefrom. A feeling of friendly satisfaction engendered by Knowledge, Understanding and Appreciation is the inception of this consumer-benevolence.

The various factors that jointly and severally enter into these great merchandising truths I will not insist upon. But it would give me great satisfaction if you and Mr. Russell would meet the members of our organization and talk the whole matter over frankly and fully. Mr. Russell and your good self and the writer ought to get together in the near future for a long, serious talk on the whole proposition. We could not do nearly so well for you if our headquarters were not in New York, where we can have daily intimate conference with your organization headquarters. Our psychological director for the Chicago Territory, Mr. Alfred Ampere, has been so stimulated by what he has heard of your plans, that he wires me asking to be transferred to New York if our proposition goes through. I am inclined to favour appointing him as chief contact man, so that he could be

summoned at any time within twenty minutes if a conference were called.

The objectives are all clearly defined, and we are ready to go to work. This is simply to assure you of my own personal appreciation of the splendid energy and fighting spirit your organization exhibits, and to hope that from the very inception of the Ginger Cubes we may be accorded an opportunity to coöperate in the public educationalization which is the real satisfaction of the advertising profession.

Cordially yours,

GEO. W. GRAY.

Technical Director, Gray Matter Advertising Agency.

XVIII

[*Story in the New York Lens, April 23, written by the star humorous reporter.*]

CUPID COMES TO DOCTORS' AID

HOSPITAL ROMANCE CULMINATES
IN PATIENT WEDDING
PRETTY NURSE

Allan Russell, advertising man, left Hippocrates Hospital yesterday afternoon, completely cured of a stubborn case of nervous debility that at first puzzled the doctors. With him, in a taxi-

cab, was Miss Candida Cumnor, one of the nurses, still in her uniform. They went to the Little Church Around the Corner and were married. After the ceremony, Mrs. Russell took her husband's temperature with a clinical thermometer. It was Centigrade A, or whatever the normal reading is. She did not test his pulse, which was probably excusably fluttered. Even a hardened reporter, who horned in on this story by accident, was stirred by the sight of the bride in her crisp white linen. She has golden-bronzy hair and indigo eyes, or they looked that way in the twilight of the church. But what's the use? She is now Mrs. Russell.

During Mr. Russell's illness Miss Candida had charge of the case. She sympathized with his business problem—Dr. Nichevo, the Hippocrates expert on nervous mechanics, said that he had been run down by too constant intercourse with advertising agencies. She took his temperature soothingly with that cold little glass tube. But what she took away with one hand she gave back with the other. When her palm floated like a water-lily across his commerce-heated brow his mind grew calm, but his heart was caloric. As he became stronger she assisted him with advertising layouts which were spread on the bed, and they pored over them together. Why is it, we wonder, that reporters never have time to be taken ill?

Mr. Russell is Advertising Manager of the Ginger Cubes Corporation. He and his wife expect to spend their honeymoon hunting an apartment.

"Cupid is the best doctor," said Mr. Russell as they left the church. "I intend to keep the thermometer as a souvenir."

XIX

[*A letter from Nicholas Ribstone, proprietor of the Ginger Cubes, to Allan Russell.*]

Bonhomie Inn, April 23.

DEAR RUSSELL: Forgive my delay in writing, but I have exciting news for you. Miss Balboa and I have decided to get married. You know that I have always felt we laboured under a handicap in not being able to get disinterested feminine reaction on the Cubes. Miss Balboa's excellent sense will be a great help. I dare say you will be surprised—I am, myself. I had thought I was too old to become a Benedictine, but Miss Balboa has quite carried me off my feet. I must not be sentimental, however. We are going to be married here, tomorrow, very quietly.

I should have written to you before about Miss Cumnor. I thought rather well of your suggestion, but Miss Balboa has convinced me that it is better not to add to our staff just now, at any rate until we get things going.

THE STORY OF GINGER CUBES

I'm sending this to the office, as I guess you have left the hospital by now. Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Ribstone will be back in a few days.

Yours always,

NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.

XX

[Another letter from Mr. Ribstone.]

Bonhomie Inn, April 24.

DEAR RUSSELL: Just got your wire. Congratulations. It reaches me on the brink of the altar myself. My Lord, man, you should have tipped me off beforehand. It wasn't necessary for both of us to get married in order to get wifely reactions on the Cubes. If I had known sooner—but anyhow, it's all arranged now.

Miss Balboa has just about convinced me that we will do well to accept Gray Matter's proposition. I wish I could consult you about this. Perhaps you had better get in touch with Gray and have the papers ready for signing when I get to the office.

We can exchange wedding presents later on. At the moment I'm too flustered to know just what happens next.

Yours, from the jumping-off place,

NICHOLAS RIBSTONE.

XXI

[*A letter from Allan Russell to an old friend, known to us only as Bob.*]

DEAR BOB: There's the devil to pay in this office. I've just heard that old Ribstone has married Miss Balboa, his stenographer, in order to get her unbiassed reactions on business. Now I know very well that Candida and Mrs. Balboa-Ribstone will never get on together. This Balboa person, for instance, has argued old Rib into believing that the Gray Matter stuff is real. Candida doesn't fall for it, says it's the bunk. I won't go on as Ad. Mgr. if Ribstone accepts the Gray Matter contract. I just want to ask you if there's anything in your office that I could take a hand in. You know my experience and qualifications. Let me have a line.

Yrs. in haste,

A. R.

XXII

[*An editorial in LOZENGE AND PASTILLE.*]

We hear that Nicholas Ribstone, of the Ginger Cubes Corporation, has sold out his entire interest in the much-touted Cubes to the National Drug Novelties Company. This comes as quite a surprise to the trade, as no specialty in recent years had

aroused so much advance interest as the Ginger Cubes. The figure paid by National Drug Novelties for the formula, stock in hand, and jobbing contracts already arranged, is said to be half a million dollars. We await with interest to hear just how Gartenbaum and his associates will develop this property. In the meantime the affair suggests some meditations on the desirability of guarding the medicated confectionery industry against the machinations of mere adventurers and speculators.

(Walk, Not Run,
to Nearest Exit)

THE EDITOR AT THE BALL GAME

(WORLD'S SERIES OPENING, 1922)

AT THE Polo Grounds yesterday \$119,000 worth of baseball was played. Of that, however, only a meagre \$60,000 or so went to the players. We wonder how much the accumulated sports writers got for writing about it. They are the real plutocrats of professional athletics.

We have long intimated our inflexible determination to learn how to be a sports writer—or, as he is usually called, a Scribe. This is to announce progress. We are getting promoted steadily. In the 1920 World's Series we were high up in the stand. At the Dempsey-Carpentier liquidation we were not more than a parasang from the ring. We broke into the press box at the 1921 World's Series, but only in the rearward allotments assigned to correspondents from Harrisburg and Des Moines.

But our stuff is beginning to be appreciated. We are gaining. Yesterday we found ourself actually

below the sacred barrier—in the Second Row, right behind the Big Fellows. Down there we were positively almost on social terms (if we had ventured to speak to them) with chaps like Bill McGeehan and Grant Rice and Damon Runyon and Ring Lardner. Well, there are a lot of climbers in the world of sporting literature.

One incident amused us. We heard a man say, "Which one is Damon Runyon?" "Over there," said another, pointing. The first, probably hoping to wangle some sort of prestige, made for Mr. Runyon. "Hullo, Damon!" he cried genially. "Remember me?"

It must have been Pythias.

So far we have only been allowed to shoot in a little preliminary patter—what managing editors call "human interest stuff." When the actual game starts they take the wire away from us, quite rightly, and turn it over to the experts. But, being inexorably ambitious, we sit down now, after the game is over, to tell you exactly how we saw it. Because we had a unique opportunity to study a great journalist and see exactly how it's done. It was just our good luck, sitting in the second row. The second sees better than the first—it's higher. You have to use your knee for writing desk, and you have to pull up your haunches every few minutes to let by the baseball editor of the *Topeka Clarion* on his way back to Harry Stevens'

Gratis Tiffin for another platter of salad. But the second row gave us our much needed opportunity to watch the leaders of our craft.

It was just before the game began. The plump lady in white tights (a little too opulent to be Miss Kellermann, but evidently a diva of some sort) was about to begin the walking race around the bases against the athletic-looking man. She won, by the way—what a commutrix she would make. Suddenly we recognized a very Famous Editor climbing into the seat directly in front of us. He was followed by two earnest young men. One of these respectfully placed a Noiseless typewriter in front of the Editor, and spread out a thick pile of copy paper.

This young man had shell spectacles and truncated side-whiskers. Both young men were plainly experts, and were there to tell the Editor the fine points of what was happening. The Famous Editor's job was to whale it out on the Noiseless, with that personal touch that has made him (it has been said) the most successful American newspaper man.

This, we said to ourself, is going to be better than any Course in Journalism.

We admired the Editor for the competent businesslike way he went to work. He wasted no time in talking. After one intent glance round through very brightly polished spectacles, he

began to tick—to “file,” as we professionals say. Already, evidently, he felt the famous “reactions” coming to him. He looked so charmingly scholarly, like some well-loved college professor, we could not help feeling it was just a little sad to see him taking all this so seriously. He never paused to enjoy the scene (it really is a great sight, you know), but pattered along on the keys like a well-trained engine.

The two young men fed him facts; with austere and faintly indignant docility he turned these into the well-known pseudo-philosophic comment. It was beautifully efficacious. The shining, well-tended typewriter, the plentiful supply of smooth yellow paper, the ribbon printing off a clear blue, these were right under our eyes; we couldn't help seeing the story rolling out though most of the time we averted our eyes in a kind of shame. It seemed like studying the nakedness of a fine mind.

“Jack Dempsey's coming in,” said the young man. Or, “Babe Ruth at bat.” The Editor was too busy to look up often. One flash of those observant (and always faintly embittered, we thought) eyes could take in enough to keep the mind revolving through many words. “I'll take them, and correct the typographical errors,” remarked young Shellspecs, gathering up the Editor's first page. Thereafter the Editor passed over his story in “takes” and young Shellspecs copyread it with a blue

pencil. Once the Editor said, a little tartly: "Don't change the punctuation." From Shellspecs the pages went smoothly to the silent telegraph operator who sat between them.

Our mind—if we must be honest—was somewhat divided between admiration and pity. Here, indeed, is slavery, we said to ourself, watching the great man bent over his work. Babe Ruth came to the plate. Judge Landis is named after a mountain, but Ruth looks like one. There was pleasant dramatic quality in the scene: the burly, gray figure swinging its bat, the agile and dangerous-looking Mr. Nehf winding up for delivery, the twirl of revolving arms against a green background, the flashing, airy swim of the ball, the turbine circling of the bat, the STRIKE sign floating silently upon the distant scoreboard . . . but did the Editor have time to savour all this? Not he! One quick wistful peer upward through those clear lenses, he was back again on his keyboard—the Noiseless keyboard carrying words to the noisiest of papers.

And yet, we had to insist, here was also genius of a sort. The swiftness with which he translated it all into a rude, bright picture! But he was going too consciously on high, we thought. Proletarianizing it, fitting the scene into his own particular scheme of thinking, instead of genuinely puzzling out its suggestions. He was honest enough to

admit that the game itself was mostly rather dull—and in so far he was much above most of the Sporting Writers, those high-spirited lads who come back from a quite peaceable game and lead you to believe that there have been scenes of thunder and earthquake.

But, like most of us, he tended to exaggerate those things he had decided upon beforehand. He made much of the roaring of the crowd—which, after all, was not violent as crowds go; and he wrote cheerily of the bitterness of hatred manifested towards the umpires, the deadly glances of players questioning close decisions. He seemed to view these matters through a pupil dilated with intellectual belladonna (if that's what belladonna does).

He wrote something about the perfect happiness of the small boy who was the Giant mascot. Heaven, he said, would have to be mighty good to be better than this for that urchin. But to us the boy seemed totally calm, even sombre. What does baseball mean to him? More interesting, and more exact, we thought, would have been to note the fluctuating sounds of the spectators; a constant rhythm of sound and silence—the hush as the pitcher winds up, the mixed surge of comment as the ball flicks across, the sudden unanimous outcry at some dramatic stroke. Or the ironical cadenced clapping and stamping that break out

spontaneously at certain recognized moments of suspense.

But the Editor was going strong, and we felt a kind of admiring affection for him as we saw him so true to form. He picked reactions out of the ether, hit them square on the nose, and whaled them to Shellspecs. Shellspecs recorded faultless assists, zooming them in to Western Union.

In the third inning the Editor hoisted a paragraph clean over the heads of the bleachers by quoting the Bible. Mr. Bush, the red-sleeved Yankee pitcher, was at bat and lifted a midfield fly. Bancroft made a superb tergiversating catch going at full speed. It was beautifully done.

For the second time, we thought, history has been made in America by a Bancroft. "The human body is a wonderful machine," ticked the busy Editor. We watched Mr. Bancroft more carefully after that. A small agile fellow, there was much comeliness in the angle of his trunk and hips as he leaned forward over the plate, preparing for the ball.

In the fourth inning the Editor was already at page 13 of his copy. The young man with truncated side-whiskers then drew the rebuke for inserting commas into the story. The other young man, sitting behind, kept volleying bits of Inside Stuff. Scott came to bat. "This fellow," said Inside Stuff, "is known as the Little Iron Man;

he's played in one thousand consecutive games." This was faithfully relayed to the Editor by Shellspecs, and went into the story. But the Editor changed it to "almost a thousand." This pleased us, for we also felt a bit skeptical about that item.

By this time, having noted the quickness of the Editor at "reactionizing," we were very keen to get something of our own into his story. An airplane came over. Inside Stuff announced that the plane was taking pictures to be delivered in Cleveland in time for the morning papers. How he knew this, we can't guess—very likely he didn't. This also faithful Shellspecs passed on. The plane was a big silvery beauty—we remarked, loudly, to our neighbour that she looked as though made of aluminum. A moment later the Editor, having handed a page to Shellspecs, said: "Add that the plane was aluminum." Shellspecs wrote down in blue pencil: "It's an aluminum flying machine." But we mustn't be unjust. Very likely the Editor got the reaction just as we did. It was fairly obvious.

Sixth Inning—The Editor hit a hot twisting paragraph to the outposts of his syndicate, but troubled Shellspecs by saying—Mr. Whitey Witt's name having been mentioned—"Is he a Yankee or a Giant?" "He's an albino, has pink eyes," volunteered indefatigable Inside Stuff. The flying keys caught it and in it went, somewhat

philosophized: "Lack of pigment in hair, skin and retina seems not to diminish his power." Inside Stuff: "It's the beginning of the Seventh and they're all stretching. It's the usual thing." But no stretching for the Editor. He goes on and on. Twenty pages now. When his assistants put a fact just where he likes it his quick mind knocks it for five million circulation.

"Stengel, considered a very old man in baseball," says the cheery mentor. "He's thirty-one years old." To none of these suggestions does the Editor make any comment. He wastes no words—orally, at least. He knows what he wants—sifts it instantler.

We left at the end of the Eighth. The Editor was still going strong. He didn't see the game, but we think he was happy in his own way.

We hope we haven't seemed too impertinent. We want to be a Scribe—not a Pharisee. But our interest in the profession is greater than our regard for any merely individual sanctity. We've given you a faithful picture of what has been called supreme success in journalism. Take a good look at it, you students of newspapers, and see how you like it. We'll tell you a secret. It's pretty easy, if that's the sort of thing you hanker for. In a way, it's rather thrilling. But (between ourselves) it's also a Warning.

GISSING JOINS A COUNTRY CLUB

A NUMBER of our clients have been asking for news of Haphazard Gissing, the Synthetic Dog. Since we have always been so candid with our patrons, we shall have to tell the unvarnished story of the latest surprising chapter in that romantic animal's career.

We say it with reluctance, and we say it with unfeigned sadness: we have had to deport Gissing. Admirable creature though he was, active, agile (you should have seen him play catch with a rubber ball), sonorous at night when he suspected alien footstep, highly intelligent and not devoid of a rude houndish comeliness—with all these gifts, he was not congenial among children. We do not know whether it was due to some dark strain of philosophy in him that rendered him too introspective to understand the ways of juveniles, or whether it was a blend of hot cavalier jealousy—at any rate, he never seemed able to unbend properly among the extremely young. The terror

that he inspired in icemen and tinsmiths could be countenanced, but when he bristled and showed his teeth at neighbouring children something had to be done. It was the familiar problem of literature and life: here is an amiable creature, well beloved, possessed (by some kink of breeding) with an unexorcisable deviltry. We can leave it at that, and not harmonize the theme with sentimental arpeggios.

Of course the first thing to be done was to find a good home for the exile. We consulted Dr. Rothaug, the kindly veterinarian of Sea Cliff, at whose establishment Gissing took a cultural course last winter. Dr. Rothaug told us of a farmer in that pretty suburb of Glen Cove which is miscalled Skunk's Misery, who was said to be looking for a fierce watch-dog to guard his chickens. Thither we went, and found the farmer milking at a barn on the lonely hillside. But just the night before he had been given a tramp collie. We liked the look of the farm at Skunk's Misery; it was the kind of place where Gissing would have been well content, but the farmer said that one dog was enough. That night, very late, we let Gissing indoors, and shared a Last Supper with him at the icebox. Perhaps we shall remember that he seemed just a little surprised at the beef-bone and the arrowroot biscuits spread with Roquefort cheese. Well, we said to ourself defensively, he was always

fond of Roquefort; there's only a scrap of it left; and very likely he'll never taste it again.

We refuse to be stampeded into any sentiment about this matter; we always thought that Gissing, as he matured, was developing a touch of the Thomas Hardy fatalism; he would be annoyed if we tried to over-dramatize this incident.

The next day the whole family was mustered to pay parting honours; all hands were embarked in Dame Quickly; the condemned dog ate a hearty breakfast, and with a bight of clothesline about his neck was escorted to the chariot, his long unused hawser having vanished since the Urchin used it to moor a full-rigged ship to a neighbouring sapling. By this time the victim had suspected something amiss; his deeply stricken cider-coloured eye was painfully interrogative. The Dame, however, seemed to us a trifle heartless. Off she went, her cylinders drumming with their usual alacritous smoothness. To a wedding or a funeral, all one to her. Gissing, now probably reviewing inwardly the tale of his errors (there must have been many of which we are ignorant: we never did know where he went on those long daily expeditions) was (we are pleased to record it) too honourable to attempt any insincere repentances. He kept climbing into the laps of his guardians, but the ironist insists that this was not all affection, but rather that the

vibration of the floorboards tickled his pads. There was an occasional secret caress, both given and taken, but we know our clients are too stiff in the bosom to want to hear about such matters. The younger generation, in the back seat, were eager to see the country club that Gissing was going to join. So had the matter been explained to them.

Across those autumn-tinted fields of central Long Island—all colours of pink and fawn and panther with the weathered shrivelling corn-shocks like old ghost-Indian tepees, and the pumpkins bright in the stubble—we proceeded to the Bide-a-Wee Home, which lies tucked away in the woods near Wantagh. This place had been to us only a name, and indeed we knew not exactly what to expect. Great was our pleasure to find a charming old farmhouse with great barns and outhouses, and an immediate clamour from hundreds of dogs running gayly in fenced inclosures, and lesser dogs, both hale and cripple, about the yard. Gissing hopped out blithely: his tail lifted sharply over his back, feathering downward as it curved: the warm October air, one supposes, came to him sharply barbed with the aromas of innumerable congenials. He was very much alive, and walked nimbly on cushion toes. Holding the rope, we walked among the barns, saluted by prodigious applause from all sides.

Even an inclosure full of cats showed gracious interest. The conclusion drawn by the Younger Generation was that Gissing's friends were glad to see him. Then came a genial curator, Gissing was led to a wire gate, and introduced into an orchard plot among about thirty more or less his own size. There was a good deal of bristling and growling, but he stood his ground calmly while a dozen or so of his new clubmates inquired into his credentials.

We had been somewhat troubled by the sign, board of the Bide-a-Wee, which calls itself a Home for Friendless Animals. We wished to impress upon the curator that Gissing was far from friendless, but we soon found that the legend on the board was inaccurate. Many very well-loved animals go there, for one reason or another; the organization tries to find a suitable home for all the beasts in its care; the name and characteristics of each are entered in a ledger when it arrives, and, if he so desires, the previous owner is notified when the animal goes to its new home. We were pleased to learn also that much of the broken bread from the Waldorf and Vanderbilt Hotels is shipped out to the Bide-a-Wee; so, if you are lunching there and don't finish your roll, perhaps Gissing will get it. (He is particularly fond of the crescent-shaped ones, with little black specks on them.) The Home is supported by voluntary contribution. In the

record book we inscribed Gissing's biography very briefly:

GISSING: origin doubtful: two years old: has always had a good home. A fine watch-dog, but not good with children.

We would have liked to go on, for much more might have been said. We would have liked to tell the friendly curator that this very week (by the quaint irony of circumstance) a book is to be published of which Gissing—somewhat transformed—is the hero. But we thought it best not to mention this, lest it get around among the other members and they taunt Gissing about it. We were happy to leave him in so congenial and friendly a home. And if any of our clients happen to need a good dog for a lonely country place—a dog who is perhaps too intellectual and excitable for children, but a tocsin of excellent acoustic strength—there you'll find him. He has promised to write to the Urchiness, provided she eats her cereal a little faster.

As we left, Gissing was standing on his hind legs looking through the fence. He wailed just a little. It would be less than justice (to both sides) not to admit it. Like Milton's hero leaving the Garden, "a few natural tears he shed, but dried them soon." As the friendly curator said, "By to-morrow he'll think he's lived here all his life." On the way

home, there being more room in the Dame, a supply of cider was laid in for consolation. Last night it seemed just a little strange to visit the ice-box all alone. To-morrow, perhaps, we shall take lunch at the Waldorf.

THE RETURN TO TOWN

IT WAS with somewhat a heavy heart that we prepared to leave Salamis for the winter. Yet inscrutable lust of adventure spurred us on; the city, also, is the place for work. In the country one is too comfortable, and there are too many distractions. Either cider, or stars, or the blue sparkle of the furnace fire—all these require frequent attentions. But it was hard to part with Long Island's charms in November, loveliest of months. The copper-coloured woods, the chrysanthemums, the brisk walk to the morning train, the yellow crackle of logs in the chimney, the chill dry whisper of the neighbouring belt of trees heard at midnight from an airy veranda—these are some of the excitements we shall miss. Most of all, perhaps, that stony little unlit lane, traversed in pitch darkness towards supper time, until, coming clear of the trees, you open up the Dipper, sprawled low across the northern sky.

It was hard, too, to leave Salamis just when its winter season of innocent gayeties was commencing. You would hardly believe how much is

going on! Did you know that that deathless old railroad station is being (as they say of ships) re-conditioned? And there's going to be a drug store in Salamis Heights. The new Methodist church is nearly finished—and, most glamorous of all, we now have an actual tea-room at the entrance to the Salamis Estates. When you are motoring out that way you can see if we don't speak the truth. In another five years, most likely, we shall have street lights along our lonely wood road to Green Escape—and pavements—and gas to cook with. But there never will be quite as many fairies in the woods as there have been these past three years.

But, perhaps fortunately, the day set for moving into town was wet and drizzly. And the labour of piling into Dame Quickly various baggages, hampers, toys, a go-cart, and the component railings, girders, rods, springs and mattresses of two cribs was lively enough to oust from the mind any pangs of mere sentiment. The mind of one who has accomplished that task, in shirt-sleeves under a dripping weather, is heated enough to make him ready for any sort of adventurous foray. The Dame, also, grossly overloaded, and travelling smartly on greasy ways, was skiddish. As is ever our fortune, we found the road through Astoria torn up for repairs. This involved a circuit along a most horrible bypath, where our ill-adjusted

freight leaped crazily with every lurch, go-cart and mattresses descended on our neck, and the violence of the bumping caused the crib-girders to burst through the rear of the Dame's canopy. Also we incurred, and probably deserved, a stern rebuke from a gigantic policeman on Second Avenue. To tell the truth, in a downshoot of rain and peering desperately through a streaming wind-shield, we did not know he was a policeman at first. We thought he was an L pillar.

Yet, when both voyages were safely accomplished—one for the baggage, and one for the household: it would be harder to say which lading was the tighter squeeze—what an exhilaration to move once more in the city of our adoring. It is true that we began by making an immediate enemy in the apartment house, for, as we were quite innocently taking a trunk upstairs in the elevator, assisted by the cheerful elderly attendant, a lady living in the same house entered by chance and burst into violent reproach because *her* baggage had had to go aloft in the freight elevator. She accused the attendant of favouritism to which he, quite placidly, explained that this particular baggage had been delivered at the front door in a private car. This compliment to the Dame pleased us, but knowing nothing of the rules, and being wet and pensive, we pretended to be an expressman and said naught. The only

other shock was when we took the Dame to a neighbouring garage to recuperate for a few days. (We were glad, then, it had been raining, for the well-loved vehicle looked very sleek and shiny, and it was too dark for the garage man to notice the holes in her top. We wouldn't want him to sneer at her, and his garage, we observed, was full of very handsome cars.) When he said it would cost the Dame \$1.50 a night to live there we were a little horrified. That, we reflected, was what we used to pay ourself at the old Continental Hotel in Philly, the inn where the Prince of Wales (the old one) and Dickens and Lincoln and others stayed. We now look with greater and greater astonishment at all the cars we see in New York. How can any one afford to keep them?

We were dispatched to do some hasty marketing, in time for supper. We made off to our favourite shopping street—Amsterdam Avenue. Delightedly we gazed into those alluring windows. In a dairy, a young lady of dark and appealing loveliness made us welcome. When we ordered milk and laid in a stock of groceries, making it plain to her (by consulting a list) that we were speaking on behalf of the head of the house, she urged us to advise Titania to open an account. Money she seemed loath to accept; it could all be paid for at the end of the month, she said. It is well to shop referring perplexedly to a little list. This

proves that you are an humble, honest pater-familias, acting only under orders. To such credit is always lavish, and fair milkmaids generously tender.

Various tradesmen in that neighbourhood were surprised, in the tail end of a wet and depressing day, by unexpected increments of traffic. "Just nick the bone?" inquired the butcher, when, from our list, we read him the item about rib lamb chops. "Yes, just nick the bone," we assented, not being very definite on the subject. We were interested in admiring the thick sawdust on the floor, very pleasant to slide the foot upon. The laundryman was just closing when we arrived with our bundle. "Here's a new customer for you," we announced. Whatever private sorrows he has were erased from his manly forehead. He told us that he also does tailoring. Cleaning and pressing, he insisted. We had a private feeling, a little shameful, that he hasn't got as good a customer as he imagines. Next door to the tailor, by the way, and right opposite the apartment house, is a carpenter who advertises his skill at bookshelves.

How different it is from Salamis nights. Hanging out of the kitchen window (having gone to the rear of the apartment to see what the icebox is like: it's a beauty)—instead of Orion's Belt and the dry rustle of the trees, we see those steep walls of lighted windows, discreetly blinded, hear sudden

shrills of music from above and below. Just through the wall, as we lie abed, we can hear the queer droning whine of the elevator; through the open window, the clang of trolleys on Broadway. Hunting through the books that belong in the furnished apartment, after startling ourself by reading Mr. D. H. Lawrence's poems called *Look! We Have Come Through!* we found an old Conan Doyle—always our favourite bedtime author. *The Adventures of Gerard*, indeed, and we are going to have a go at it immediately.

Yes, it's very different from Salamis; but Adventure is everywhere, and we like to take things as we find them. We have never been anywhere yet, whether in the steerage of the *Mauretania* or in a private lunchroom at the Bankers' Club, where there wasn't more amusement than we deserved.

BUDDHA ON THE L

IN FRANK SHAY'S bookshop we found *A Buddhist Catechism*, by Subhadra Bhikshu. We have never known much about the Buddha—so little, in fact, that we thought that was his name. (His name was Prince Siddhartha Gotama.) But we have always felt that he was a kinsprit.

We opened the book at random and the first thing we saw was:

95. *Did not the Buddha give us any information concerning the first beginning and ultimate destiny of the Universe?*

No;

96. *Did he know nothing about it?*

He knew, but he taught us nothing.

There was a subtlety about that that pleased us greatly. It reminded us of a Chinese mandarin of our acquaintance who says that the universe was Dictated but not Signed. Immediately we forked out \$1.25 to Frank Shay and took the book.

Frank was so pleased to sell a book (business is said to be at a very meagre pulse in Greenwich Village in midsummer) that he at once responded by buying our lunch. We retorted generously enough by buying a copy of Anatole France's *L'Ile des Pingouins*, which we have been hearing about for ten years or so. We were interested to note that our copy is the "Cent Quatre-Vingt-Sixième Edition." Considering the book was published only fourteen years ago, that seems good progress.

Coming back downtown on the L we went at Buddha hard and with great satisfaction. We learned that Buddha is not a name but means a state of mind, or Enlightenment. We learned the answers to the following questions:

- 129. *Why has the upright and just man often so much to suffer here on earth?*
- 130. *How is it that the wicked and unjust man often enjoys pleasures and honours?*
- 118. *What is a meritorious action?*
- 109. *Why is not a layman able to reach Nirvana?*

We can hear you clamouring to know the answers to these exciting questions; they are right here before us; but our duty is not to solve problems, only to propound them.

But you must get it clearly in your minds that the Buddha is not a God. The Buddhist Catechism

expressly rejects "a personal God-Creator," and "distinctly denies the doctrine of a creation out of nothing. Everything owes its origin and development to its own inherent vitalism, or, what comes to the same, its own will to live." The Buddha was not a God, but "a man far superior to ordinary men, one of a series of self-enlightened sublime Buddhas, who appear at long intervals in the world, and are morally and spiritually so superior to erring, suffering mankind, that to the childlike conceptions of the multitude they appear as Gods or Messiahs."

This is all tremendously exciting and leads to many pure and thrilling speculations that are much too honourable to pursue here. They would get us into horrible trouble, we feel sure. Indeed we are not at all certain whether both Frank Shay and ourself are not already subject to possible legal duress for vending and discussing so dangerous a book. But a noble analogy occurs to us which we venture with humility. Charley Chaplin is a great comedian. But the simple-minded drama critics are not content to leave it at that. They will have it (although it is now *vieux jeu*) that he is really a Great Tragic Artist. And so the tradition will go down to posterity that he was a Secret Hamlet, an Edgar Poe in clown's trousers. Charley himself, finding that his intellectual disciples insist upon this, perhaps acquiesces in the idea.

Only by doing so, he may feel, can he get his stuff across.

It is really very astonishing; at this moment our Employer brings in to us a letter he has had from a publisher, which begins:

Do you agree with me that there is a need for a book on the fundamentals of public opinion, for a book that will endeavour to define the new profession of public relations counsel, its scope and its functions and its relations specifically to the press and to the public generally?

A Public Relations Counsel, of course, is simply the post-war name for a Press Agent. But we mustn't be ribald. The press agent, if conscientious, may contribute a valuable function. We ourselves have worked as a free-lance Press Agent for George Fox, Sir Thomas Browne, Herman Melville, Thoreau, Lao-Tse, Pearsall Smith, and various other people who have seemed to us to have the Right Idea. But one of the troubles is that there have been (and always will be) a lot of unauthorized Public Relations Counsels who get the ear of the crowd and limn upon the great canvas of the public a portrait of the Prophet which is very different from what that poor dreamer himself may have wished. Even the humblest of authors has frequently cursed the publisher's man who writes the copy for his book-jacket. If you want a really pregnant speculation, weigh in your mind

how many Public Relations Counsels there have been in the world of religion, and how amazingly they have interpreted and toned down the simple dissolvents of the founders of their creeds.

C. E. Montague, in *Disenchantment*, puts it beautifully:

Ever since those disconcerting bombs [i.e., *the words of Christ*] were originally thrown courageous divines and laymen have been rushing in to pick them up and throw them away, combining as well as they could an air of respect for the thrower with tender care for the mental ease of congregations occupied generally in making money and occasionally in making war. Yet there they lie, miraculously permanent and disturbing, as if just thrown. Now and then one will go off, with seismic results, in the mind of some St. Francis or Tolstoy.

The Buddha, sitting under his Bo Tree (*ficus religiosa*)—and it is fairly obvious why so many philosophers have chosen fig trees to sit under; a really lusty fig will bear, according to the New International Encyclopædia, three crops of fruit in a season, thus keeping the eremite well fed; and a fig, L. E. W. says, is what he doesn't give for the ideas of rival magi) is to us an enviable vision. We wonder how his meditations would have fared if there had been a telephone at the foot of the tree.

The only drawback, as far as we are concerned, to becoming a Buddhist is the vow to abstain from

intoxicating liquors. In this respect the Western religions seem to us more liberal. We have meditated long and earnestly on the subject and still have never been able to understand why an occasional exhilarating drink should be contrary to any wise man's ethic. Indeed, if Nirvana (or Perfect Release from Struggle) is the object of life, we have seen it well attained by three or four juleps or Tom-and-Jerries. The lay Buddhist has to take five vows; the Bhikshus (or Brotherhood of the Elect) take ten. Some of these additional vows required of the Bhikshu are:

I vow and promise not to eat food at unseasonable times—that is, after the midday meal.

I vow and promise not to dance, sing light songs, frequent public amusements, and, in short, to avoid worldly dissipation of every kind.

I vow and promise not to wear any kind of ornament, nor to use any scents or perfumes, and, in short, to avoid whatever tends to vanity.

I promise and vow to give up the use of soft bedding and to sleep on a hard, low couch.

These, we admit, present some difficulties. Frequenting "public amusements" offers too many opportunities for quibble. In one sense every possible mingling with the world is a public amusement. If there is anything more amusing than a smoking car full of men or a Broadway pavement

at lunch time we don't know what it would be. Sleeping on a hard, low couch is easy enough—we can sleep anywhere with equal satisfaction, even on the floor. The queer thing that we always notice about every kind of moral code is that, sooner or later, it begins to lose sight of the distinction between essentials and non-essentials. Such matters as intoxicating drink and public amusements should not be (for the Western philosopher) subject to prescriptive legislation. The individual may very rightly impose restraints upon himself in non-essential matters; but to lay them upon him from above is to stultify the whole purport of ethics—which, if we understand it, is to encourage and develop a worthy personal will. And the Buddhist Catechism recognizes this in a very potent phrase—"Every one of us must become his own redeemer."

But Buddhism seems to have a firm grasp on one very essential and valuable idea, which is comparatively rare among religions. Thus the Catechism:

43. *Does Buddhism teach its followers to hate, despise, or persecute non-believers?*

Quite the reverse. It teaches us to love all men as brethren, without distinction of race, nationality, or creed; to respect the convictions of men of other beliefs, and to be careful to avoid all religious controversy. The

Buddhist religion is imbued with the purest spirit of perfect toleration. Even where dominant, it has never oppressed or persecuted non-believers, and its success has never been attended with bloodshed. The true Buddhist does not feel hatred, but only pity and compassion for him who will not acknowledge or listen to the truth, to his own loss and injury only.

Of course, all forms of human attempt to unscrew the inscrutable are fascinating and full of interest. The Westerner, however, is a bit troubled when he finds "Love of life on earth" listed among the "ten fetters" which, according to the Buddha, prevent the soul from receiving full freedom and enlightenment. That seems, to our earth-bound and muddled conceptions, a shabby doctrine. Even the most timid tincture of good manners suggests that a life so exciting, so amusing, so painful, so perplexing, and so variously endowed with unearned beauty and amazement deserves at least a courteous gratefulness on our part. Mr. C. E. Montague (if you will allow us to quote him once more), explains what we mean:

Among the mind's powers is one that comes of itself to many children and artists. It need not be lost, to the end of his days, by any one who has ever had it. This is the power of taking delight in a thing, or rather in anything, everything, not as a means to some other end, but just because it is what it is. . . . A child in the full health of his mind will put his hand flat on the

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summer turf, feel it, and give a little shiver of private glee at the elastic firmness of the globe. He is not thinking how well it will do for some game or to feed sheep upon. . . . No matter what the things may be, no matter what they are good or no good for, there they are each with a thrilling unique look and feel of its own, like a face; the iron astringently cool under its paint, the painted wood familiarly warmer, the clod crumbling enchantingly down in the hands, with its little dry smell of the sun and of hot nettles; each common thing a personality marked by delicious differences.

It is this sensuous cheerfulness in mere living, apparently, that the Buddhist would have us cast away. You remember Rupert Brooke's fine poem "The Great Lover." Western students may be pardoned for wondering whether "Love of life on earth," whatever that life's miseries, ills, and absurdities, is not too precious to be tossed lightly aside.

THE FUN OF WRITING

ON THE way to the station this morning }
warm }
chilly }

[*Note to Linotype Man: Please kill the inappropriate adjective; we like to be accurate, and this April weather is so inconstant*] we were thinking how little appreciated is the true pleasure of writing.

Writing is an art (or, if you prefer, a trade) never wholly and properly enjoyed except by the intensely indolent. What we mean is this: there are a lot of things in life that are not at all as they should be. But the writer, by magnificent pretence, improves all that. Gardening, for instance. No one enjoys seeing beds thickly decorated with bright flowers and superb vegetables more than we do. But the grubby and tiresome task of groping about with trowels and quicklime and all the other fertilizers is distasteful. Getting sweet peas to climb is a noxious business. Somehow the seedsman always palms off on us a kind of horizontal

sweet pea that runs lowly along the ground and never blossoms at all. But take up the pen, or typewriter, and how quickly everything is rectified. When you set to work to compose a story, how easy it is to have things nice and genteel. Thus:

Out in the bland freshness of the suburban morning, Mr. Frogbones was enjoying his garden. In twin beds under the tall French windows the gardenias and sunflowers were just opening towards the violent orb. Sweet peas and daffodils and vast claret-coloured roses aspired upon a green trellis. "How I love a little nosegay," he said, as he clipped off a couple of dozen of the great cider-tinted chrysanthemums, and bore them indoors to his wife. In the breakfast room a well-trained maid servant was putting the fragrant coffee on the table and the children were drinking their morning milk with neatness and gusto. "Elise," said Mrs. Frogbones to the maid, "you may bring in the sausages, kidneys, bacon, scrambled eggs, anchovy toast, marmalade, grape fruit, porridge, raisin bread, and gooseberry jam. Mr. Frogbones is ready for breakfast."

Now what could be easier, what could be more agreeable, than to write that? And yet not a word of it is true. We know Henry Frogbones well: his garden is contemptible; the maid's coffee is execrable, and she is going to leave at the end of the week anyway; his children roar with anguish when they see a mug of milk, which they detest.

THE FUN OF WRITING

But how pleasant it is to lend a hand to the travelling universe when you are writing.

As Henry Frogbones finished his ample breakfast the large absinthe-coloured limousine rolled with a quiet crunch across the terrace which was pebbled with small blue gravel. He slipped on his new herringbone sur-tout, lit a fine black cheroot, hitched up one spat which had got twisted, and rolled away to town. Ambrose, the chauffeur, was accustomed to his employer's ways: he drove gently so that Mr. Frogbones could read the morning paper with comfort. After an hour's ride through exquisite scenery [*if the editor pays more than five cents a word, it may be well to describe this scenery*] Mr. Frogbones reached his office, where the morning mail had already been opened and classified by a competent assistant. In the anteroom a number of callers were waiting, held in check by a respectful young man who was explaining to them that no one can possibly disturb Mr. Frogbones until his morning article is written. . . .

As a matter of fact, we don't feel that we can go on with this any further; it is beginning to seem too unlikely. But it only seems unlikely to us, because we know the truth about old Frogbones. The average magazine reader would swallow it without cavil. That is why we say that writing is huge fun, because you can solve all the perplexities and distractions of life as you go along, and really enjoy yourself at the same time, and (most remarkable of all) get paid for it.

A CHRISTMAS SOLILOQUY

I

IN THE most peaceful spot known to American life—a railroad train—we had several hours of that pleasure which offices are devised to prevent, viz., meditation; or even (if we may dare so high) thought. Our thoughts, or whatever they are that go round inside you when you are sitting passively in a train, were tinged by the approach of Christmas.

There was evidently something in the bright air and pre-Christmas feeling of that December afternoon that even softened the heart of the news butcher, for we noticed as the train hastened along the Connecticut shore his manner became more and more fond. He began, at Grand Central, in a mood of formality, even austerity. "Lots of nice reading matter here, gentlemen," he cried. "Get a nice short story book" (by "book" he meant, of course, magazine) "to kill time for a coupla hours." We thought, perhaps a little sadly, of the irony of begging men to annul Time when they had happily reached almost the only place

A CHRISTMAS SOLILOQUY

in America where it can be enjoyed, examined, taken apart, and looked at. But, perhaps due to a niggardly spirit among his congregation in the smoker, the agent gradually became more fraternal. His manner was almost bedside by the time we had got to New Rochelle. "Choclut pepmints, figs, and lemon drops, fellas!" And at Stamford he was beginning to despair. "Peanuts; they're delicious, boys." We made up our mind, by the way, as to the correct answer to our old question, Where does New England begin? The frontier is at South Norwalk, for there we saw a sign *The New England Cereal Company*. And just about there, also, begin the billboards urging Codfish, surely the authentic image and superscription of New England.

Of course there is a great deal to think about in the signs you see along the track. There is that notice:

DANGEROUS
LIVE WIRES
KEEP AWAY

which is a good advice socially as well as electrically. But we thought that these warnings were a bit unfair to New England, where there are fewer human Live Wires than there are south of the

Harlem Strait. We remembered a certain club in Philadelphia of which the bitter-minded used to say it was the only organization in the world whose membership was 100 per cent. Live Wires, Regular Fellows, and Go-Getters.

As we went through Greenwich, Riverside, Westport, we admired the blue shore of Long Island lying so placidly across the Sound. And it struck us almost with a sense of shock that there are a great many people to whom Long Island is only a dim, unreal haze on the horizon. Yes, foreign travel is a brisk aperient to the mind. We remembered, as we always do when travelling on the New Haven, Robert Louis Stevenson's delight when he first went that way. In one of his letters he speaks of the succession of beautiful rocky coves that saluted his eye. "Why," he wrote, "have Americans been so unfair to their own country?"

It would be impossible to tell you all the things we thought about: they have already faded. We did not forget our duty, as a travelling mandarin, to be a little magisterial when occasion seemed to require it. In the station at New Haven, for instance, there is a young woman, most remarkably coifed, who presides at the tobacco counter. She seemed of a notably cheerful and lenient disposition, and we ventured a remark upon the weather. She said she wished it would

snow, so that she could have some real fun, by which she meant, we dare say, a little bobsledding with the youths of Yale College. We thought that this showed a dangerous inappreciation of her general opulent good fortune in being young, comely, and attached to a tobacco traffic. We looked at her quite sternly and said, "Young women can always have a good time, no matter what the weather." To our regret, as we hastened on toward the Springfield train, we heard her squeaking with mirth.

But the starting point of our meditations was an attempt to describe and dissect this curious pre-Christmas feeling, which is one of the most subtle and genuine adventures of the whole year. When we try to examine it in its components we see that the whole thing is too delicate and pervasive for analysis. What are its ingredients? we said to ourself. We thought of the little shrill tingling bells of the Salvation Army; we thought of the warm juicy smell of roasting chicken that out-gushes from a certain rotisserie in Jamaica, Long Island. We thought of the bright colours and toys in the windows of that glorious main street in Jamaica, which is where we do our Christmas shopping. We thought of all the sparkle, the chill, clear air, the general bustle of the streets, that one associates with the Christmas season; and of the undercurrent of dumb and troubled realization of

human misery and stupidity and frustration that comes to some more clearly now than at any other time. And we thought also of the mockers and the cheerful skeptics, to whom any candid expression of a simple human emotion is cause for nipping laughter. Never mind, we said to ourself, there is at least one time of year when they can all afford to put away their shining paradoxes and their gingerbread cynicisms—like the gilded circus wagons we saw shut up in winter quarters at Bridgeport.

Probably the most sensitive and complex of human sensations is the pre-Christmas feeling: because it is not merely personal but communal; not merely communal but national; not merely national but even international. We know then that for a few weeks a great part of the world is busily thinking of the same things: how it can surprise its friends, how it can encourage the miserable, how it can amuse the harmless. Even the dingiest street has its pathetic badges of colour. It is a great thing to have such a widespread community of sentiment, which, however varying in expression, is identical in essence. One may be amused when he sees the Christmas Annuals published by Australian magazines and finds under the title *A Happy Christmas in New South Wales* a photograph of girls in muslin enjoying themselves by picnicking along shady streams

with canoes and mosquito nettings. That kind of Christmas, we think, would seem very grotesque for us, but our friends the New South Welsh evidently find it exhilarating.

But it is that mysterious and agreeable pre-Christmas feeling which is the best of the whole matter. Christmas Day itself is sometimes almost too feverish a business of picking up blizzards of wrapping paper, convincing the Urchin that his own toys are just as interesting as the Urchiness's, and treading on tiptoe for fear of walking on the clockwork train or the lurking doll. At Christmas time we always think—probably we are the only person who does—of the late admirable William Stubbs, once Bishop of Oxford and Regius Professor of history, the author of those three fat mulberry coloured volumes *The Constitutional History of England*, a work far from easy to read, and which, when we were compelled to study it, seemed of an intolerable dullness. Bishop Stubbs, in the dreadful words of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, “never forgot that he was a clergyman.” It is also said that “his lectures never attracted a large audience.” But what we are getting at is this, that on Christmas Day, 1873, the excellent Bishop retired from the gambols and gayeties of his five sons and one daughter and wrote the preface to his History. We love to think of him, worthy man, shutting himself up from the

Yuletide riot in roomy old Kettel Hall (now a part of Trinity College, Oxford) and sitting down to write those words, "The History of Institutions cannot be mastered—can scarcely be approached—without an effort." Now that we are somewhat matured, we think that we could probably reread his *Constitutional History* with much profit. In that Christmas Day preface, written while the young Stubbses were (we suppose) filling the house with juvenile clamour, there is one phrase that catches our eye as we take the book down for its annual dusting:

"Constitutional History reads the exploits and characters of men by a different light from that shed by the false glare of arms. The world's heroes are no heroes to it."

II

We shall remember the Christmas of 1921, partly, at any rate, by the wonderful succession of pellucid, frosty, moonlit nights that preceded it. We walked round and round our rustic grange trying to focus just what we wanted to say to our friends as a Christmas greeting. A curious misery was upon our spirit, for we felt that in many ways we had been recreant to the spirit of friendship. When we think, for instance, of the unanswered letters. . . . We have sinned horribly. Yet we wanted to give ourself the selfish pleasure of

A CHRISTMAS SOLILOQUY

saying a word of affection to those who have been kind to us, and to whom, in the foolish but unavoidable hurry of daily affairs, we have been discourteous. (The way to love humanity, we said to ourself, is not to see too much of it.) Moreover, to write a kind of Christmas sermon is, apparently, to put one's self into the loathsome false position of seeming to assume those virtues one praises.

We remember the first clergyman who made an impression upon our childish mind. It was in a country church in a village where we were visiting some kinsmen. This parson was a great bearded fellow, long since gone the way of flesh. He was a bit of a ritualist; his white surplice and embroidered streamers of red and gold impressed us enormously. He came very close to our idea of Divinity itself. We used to sit and hear him booming away and think, vaguely, how wonderful to be as virtuous as that. When the organ throbbed and his vast gray beard rose ecstatically above his white-robed chest we thought that here was Goodness incarnate. Years later we asked what had become of him. We heard that he had lost his job because he drank too much. The more we think about that the tenderer our feeling is towards his memory. Only the sinner has a right to preach.

Thinking about this pre-Christmas feeling, and wanting to say something about it, but not knowing how, we got (as we started to tell you) on a

train. We went, for a few hours, to another city. There we saw, exhilaratingly different, but fundamentally the same, the shining business of life going forward. The people in that city were carrying on their own affairs, were hotfoot upon their own concerns; we saw their eager, absorbed faces, and what struck us was, here are all these people, whose lives are totally sundered from our own, but they have, at heart, the same hopes and aspirations, the same follies, weaknesses, disgusts, and bitternesses as ourself. And the same would be so of a thousand cities, and of a hundred thousand. Then we got into one of those things called a sleeper, which ought to be called a thinker. An ideal cloister for meditation. All down the dark aisle we could hear the innocent snores of our fellows, but we ourself lay wakeful. We felt rather like the mystic Russian peasant who goes to bed in his coffin. We were whirled along through a midnight landscape of transparent white moonlight, and, quite as cheerful as the dead child in Hans Andersen borne through starry space by the angel, we made our peace with everything. We claim no credit for this. We would have slept if we could. There was a huge bump in the middle of the berth, and there was a vile cold draught. We read part of Stephen Crane's magnificent sketch *The Scotch Express*. But those miserable little dim lamps——

A CHRISTMAS SOLILOQUY

And then, strangely enough, there came a sudden realization of the amazing richness and fecundity of life. Every signboard along the railroad track is an illustration of it. Hideous enough, still it is a kind of endless vista into the huge jumble of human affairs. Here is a billboard crying out something about a Spark Plug, or about the Hotel Theresa; or on the side of a little shabby brick tenement a painted legend about Bromo Seltzer. Someone worked to put that advertisement up; someone had sufficient credulity or gambling audacity to pay for it; somewhere children are fed and clothed by that spark plug. Christmas itself suddenly seemed a kind of spark plug that ignites the gases and vapours of selfishness and distrust and explodes them away. Everything seemed extraordinarily gallant and exciting. Take the Hotel Theresa, for instance. We had never heard of it before. It is on 125th Street, we gathered. We would like to wager that all sorts of adventures are lying in wait up there, if we can slip away and go looking for them.

As we were lying in our cool tomb (Carl Sandburg's phrase) in the thinking car, we meditated something like this: Christmas is certainly a time when a reasonable man should overhaul his religion and see if it amounts to anything. Christmas is a time when millions of people are thinking of the same thing. Humanity is so constituted

that you can never get the world to agree about things that have happened; but it is happily at one about something that probably never happened—the Christmas story as told in the Gospels. If millions of simple people believe a thing, that doesn't make it true; but perhaps it makes it better than true: it makes it Poetry, it makes it Beauty. Stephen Graham says, in that moving book *With Russian Pilgrims to Jerusalem* (which certainly ought to be read by every one who is at all interested in religion; it is published by Thomas Nelson & Sons, you may have to get it from London, we don't believe it is in print over here)—Stephen Graham says: "True Religion takes its rise out of Mystery, and not out of Miracle." Religion, which has proved to be one of the greatest dividing and hostilizing forces in the world, is in its essence just the opposite. Surely, in the origin of the word, religion means a binding together, a ligament. Now take the most opposite people you can think of—say Babe Ruth and the Sultan of Turkey (is there still a Sultan?); or say Mr. Balfour and the chap who runs the elevator in this office. No matter how different these may be in training and outlook, there will be some province of human thought and emotion, some small, sensitive spot of the mind, in which they can meet and feel at one. We can imagine them sitting down together for lunch and having a mutually

improving time, each admiring and enjoying the other. Widen the incongruity of the individuals as much as you like: imagine Mr. Joseph Conrad and Dr. Berthold Baer; or Mr. James W. Elliott (the Business Builder) and Mahatma Gandhi—we care not who they are, if they can make their thoughts intelligible to each other they can find that remote but definite point of tangency where any experienced mind can meet and sympathize with any other human mind, discussing the problems of destiny which are common to all. It is this Common Multiple of humanity, this sensitive pulse in the mind, this realization of a universal share in an overburdening mystery too real to be ignored, but too terrific to be defined or blurred about, that is the province of religion.

And then the devil of it (for there is always a Devil in every sensible religion) is that the best way to be sure there is this possible point of junction is not to attempt to find it. Both Mr. Balfour and the cheerful elevator boy would probably pray heartily to be delivered from sitting down to lunch together. This mysterious mental sensitive spot that we speak of remains sensitive only as long as it remains private and secret. Perhaps religion can be defined as a sense of human fellowship that is best preserved by not being too companionable.

We were thinking, too, how extremely modern

and contemporary the Christmas story seems. It is appropriate that the final instalment of the Income Tax falls just before Christmas. The same thing happened 1921 years ago. "There went out a decree that all the world should be taxed," says Luke. That was why Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem—to pay their tax. And we can imagine that the Bethlehem *Evening Star*, if there had been newspapers at that time, would have had a column of social notes just similar in spirit to those of our own press to-day. The arrival of Joseph and Mary would not have been noticed. We might have read:

Mr. and Mrs. Pharisee of "White Sepulchre," Galilee, are spending the winter at the Tiberius Hotel.

The Hon. Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judæa, is enjoying a week-end visit with Tetrarch and Mrs. Herod at the tetrarchal mansion.

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Herod are travelling in Syria for the winter. Mrs. Herod was before her marriage Miss Herodias, socially prominent.

Prof. Melchior, Prof. Balthazar, and Prof. Gaspar arrived last night from the West. They are said to be in town for some astronomical investigations. The professors had great trouble in securing hotel accommodations, the city being so crowded.

Rev. Caiaphas, one of the most respected High Priests in this diocese, has an apartment for the winter at Philactery Court.

A CHRISTMAS SOLILOQUY

The train pursued its steady way through the moonlight, and the silvered loveliness of earth and trees made us think generously of our own country. We are still foolish enough to love this America of ours with a dumb queer love. We still believe that in spite of Senates and Live Wires, in spite of the antics of some of the half-educated and well-meaning men who "govern" us, this country has a unique contribution to make to the world in future years. There should be international Christmas cards: there should be some way of one nation surprising another with a friendly message on the Morning of Mornings. We believe (perhaps we are not impartial) that the English-speaking race, by its contributions to human liberty, has a right to a leading place in the world's affairs; but if it gives way to its characteristic vice of arrogance, we weary of it. We think of the feminine brilliance, charm, and emotional volatility of France; of the beautiful sensibility and self-control of Japan; of the melancholy idealism of Russia; of the sober industry of Germany. Have we, then, nothing to learn from these? Printers' ink is scattered about these days with such profusion that it becomes almost meaningless. Sitting in the subway, and raising our eye plaintively from a newspaper to an advertising card, we have wondered which was the greater menace, Pyorrhea or Japan? Both were said to be menaces. It is our

own conviction that nothing can be a menace to America but itself.

This seems a dismal kind of Christmas homily, but we enjoyed ourself immensely while we were meditating it in our lower berth. Very likely if it had been an upper berth the result would have been different. In any case, we take the liberty of wishing our friends—who are, by this time, too indurated to feel surprise or chagrin at anything we may say—a Merry Christmas. We wish for them a cheerful and laborious New Year, with good books to read, and both the time and the inclination to think. We even wish for them occasional eccentric seizures, such as we feel at the present; when we have a dim suspicion that behind the noble and never sufficiently praised comedy of life there lies some simple satisfying answer to many gropings. A simple thing, but too terrible and far-reaching ever to be wholly put into practice by puzzled and compromising mankind. We mean, of course, the teachings of Christ. Consider the German generals and military men, who lost everything. But the German toymakers conquered the world.

A SEA SHELL IN NORMANDY

YOU first see Mont St. Michel from the toy railway train at St. Jean-le-Thomas. You know then that what you have always heard was true. After lunch at Genêts you drive across the sands at low tide, in a cart pulled by two horses. On a gray afternoon, with opal storm clouds coiling in the west, the wide floor of the bay lies wet and bare, shining all silver and fish-belly colours. The rock of Tombelaine sprawls like a drowsy mastiff on guard. You feel that if you stroked the warm granite chine he would rise, stretching, and fill the empty day with a yawn of thunder. In all that clean vacancy, framed in the blue scabbard of Normandy and Brittany, the holy boulder rises, a pinnacle of stone jewellery. The great ramps are rusted with tawny lichen. Tiny gardens niched among the steep zigzags are bright with flowers. With the genuine thrill and tingle of the pilgrim you climb, cricking your neck at the noble sheer of those walls and struts that lean upward and inward to carry the needle of the spire. Pinnacles rally and burn aloft like darts of flame. You can almost feel the whole roundness

of earth poise and spin, socketed upon this stony boss of peace. You think of the Woolworth Building. How nice if that too were sown with clumps of pink and yellow blossom and had blankets of green ivy over its giraffe rump.

Your mind travels back to the tough and pious men who carried their stones here and built their little Eden of escape: an Eden so shrewdly scarped that apparently even the fifteenth century Old Bills of England cursed and withdrew. You imagine the pilgrims of the Middle Ages plodding the sands from Avranches—occasionally losing one or two of the party in a quicksand—and their heavenly exult as they ached at last up the steps of the “Grand Degree” and saw through the dark archway that wide hearth shouting with flame. Yet perhaps mere pilgrims were not allowed to draw near the giant fireplaces of St. Michel? That ruddy warmth that gilded the groins of the pillars, was it reserved for the abbot and the upper clergy? (You saw, I hope, those great columns in the crypt, where the veins of stone rise to their task as smoothly, as alive with lifting strength, as the cords of a horse’s haunch.)—One wonders a good deal about the mediæval pilgrim. Was he welcomed and warmed and refreshed, or was he pillaged? Probably the souvenir vendors lay alert for him, as they do to-day. And was there a mediæval *Veuve Poulard*, down by the

barbican, with an omelet waiting hot in the pan, a bottle of wine cold in the cellar? At any rate, many a whole ox must have crackled in those vast hooded chimneys of the abbey; and the warrior abbot could throw his bones out of the window on the *goddams*, hustling to get their bombards back to Tombelaine before they were caught by the tide.

So you people this divine old miracle of stonework, just as you have dreamed beforehand of a still living shrine with candles by the altar, and small shrill choir-boys in scarlet, the flutter of surplice and *soutane*, and dark bells calling across the sandy estuary. Then, as you are taken through in squads by a *gardien*, you realize that this noble sanctuary is dead. It is no longer a church, but a monument, under the care of the Ministry of Fine Arts. The abbey is only a shell: there is not even a chance to pray. The State, with skilful devotion, has saved and repaired the hull; but it is only a hull. There if anywhere, lifted above the quicksands (how often the old abbots must have improved this moral in their discourses), one would be eager to whisper some small silly petition in honour of man's magnificent hopes. But it is not expected. The old fonts are dry, the altars naked, the tall aisles bare as a February forest. The casket of stone filigree is empty. The imprint of the spirit is there, just as those leagues of sand are ripple-patterned by this morning's ebb. But

it is only a print, a fossil. The sea has gone out. Even the tiniest parish church, with its Tariff of Marriages (a First-class Marriage 50 francs, a Second-class Marriage 30 francs, a Third-class 20 francs) is in some sense more inwardly alive. The Mount is not even an island any more: they've built a *digue* that brings autobuses and toy trains from Pontorson. It is a shrine, a miracle, a testimonial of man's horror of the world and his fellows; but its beauty is the beauty of death, purified, serene, at rest.

You drive away across the luminous mirrors of wet beach, you see that exquisite profile shift and alter until it is a scissored peak on sky. You may walk the ebb sands of the world for ever and not find so lovely a shell. But it is only a shell, and in its whorls and passages a faintest echo of the sea.

Must it always be so, one thinks, lighting up the pipe of penitential Scaferlati? Perhaps there is always something a little dead (I don't defend this figure of speech, but I like it) about the old masterpieces? Glorious and terrible, don't they say to us that we are not to be dismayed by their beauty but to recreate our own masterpieces for ourselves? The other day I read Alfred de Musset's gorgeous little fable *Histoire d'un Merle Blanc*: one of those fiery trifles in which the French genius seems at its most native: under the guise of tender and naïf simplicity such a clear

ember of satire. My first thought was that de Musset's adorable little dagger in the heart should have made (if it had been heeded) so many later books unnecessary. So far as it bears on literary manners it clicks the latch to-day as neatly as it did seventy or eighty years ago, and might have spared us many editorials in the newspapers. I laid it down with the despairing happiness that any student feels on reaching the end of a perfect thing: for I could imagine how happy was the Infant of His Century when he finished it. He had reached one of those rare and perfect moments the artist lives for. He had done it, and knew it was good.

Yet it all had to be done again—and has been. And I remembered, Mont St. Michel reinforcing it, that these things must always be done over and over; that there is no durable pause even in the most perfect pinnacles that overlook the sea. Here and there a pilgrim will be bogged in a quicksand, or get caught by the tide. But some will reach, for a one night's reverence, the shrine where the dragon of despair grinds under Michael's heel. They chant their private prayers and penances, they get out the illuminated manuscripts, they sing their sacreds, they make their mirth. They roast an ox in the fireplace, and throw the bones through the window where the critics are haling their heavy bombards through the sand.

SLOW GIN

SANTA CLAUS came back that year even more tired and discouraged than usual. Mrs. Claus had a good fire going in the library, his fur slippers warm on the hearth, but he sat down with a grunt, too dispirited even to pull off his big boots. But Mrs. Claus, who knows very well how porcupiny the philanthropists and professional genials often are when they get home, was too wise to seem to notice his depression. She drew the curtains closer to shut out the sparkling polar darkness.

"Have you noticed how long the nights are getting?" she said. "You'll be glad to get back among your books."

Santa Claus has quite a large library, his shelves are lined with those fine rag-paper and morocco-bound *de luxe* sets of Oscar Wilde and Ridpath and Great French Courtesans, numbered (like the hairs of your head) by the Biblioshark Sodality. These are the things that Santa gets stuck with, because no one wants them for Christmas and he has to bring them home with him. Mrs.

Claus, however, who doesn't know a 12mo. from an Eskimo, believes them very valuable.

But the old fellow sat staring at the fire in a serene despair, more like Santayana than Santa Claus.

"Well, did you have a good trip?" she said. "How was New York?" (Mrs. Claus is always curious to know about New York. She imagines it as a place of prodigious thrilling gayety, and Santa has told her about the shop windows and the electric signs, which really are almost as fine as the Aurora Borealis.)

He shook his head pensively.

"The competition's getting too intense," he said. "The bootlegger is the real Santa nowadays in New York. My clients all want the little miracle of liquid flame that evens man with God. I caught a terrible cold going out in a launch to get enough whiskey to satisfy my customers. A queer thing happened to me.

"Coming back in the motor boat I fell into conversation with one of the bootleggers. You'd be surprised how philosophic some of those fellows are. Well, somehow or other we got talking about moving pictures, and this chap was saying that the most beautiful thing in the world is the slowed film. He owns a movie theatre somewhere in Brooklyn, but he says he can't afford to show the kind of pictures that he likes best himself be-

cause all the crowd wants is the 'Flaming Youth' sort of thing. Well, I agreed with him about the slowed pictures. I said how wonderful it would be if we could for a few hours retard life itself just like that, to have a good look at the astonishing elements of loveliness that lurk in every movement. Curves, you know. See things in that leisurely perspective that God must have. Why even a taxi spinning round a corner would float like a leaf eddying on warm October air. But I guess I can't quite explain to you how I felt about it. I was tired, buzzing about getting things fixed up for Christmas.

"He looked at me rather queerly. 'It can't be done,' he said. 'God wouldn't like it. It's *His* prerogative to see things slowly. But if you can't slow down life, you can speed up the eye, which gives, relatively, the same effect.'

"I asked him what he meant.

"'Wood alcohol,' he said, 'has a queer effect on the optic nerve.' Well, I didn't like his talking like that, just after he had guaranteed the quality of the stuff I had got from him for my customers. But, to make it short, he gave me a little bottle, for myself, of what he called (I believe) Slow Gin. He said that for a brief time, and with no harmful effect (physically, anyhow) it would accelerate my eyes so that life would look like a slowed film."

He paused. Mrs. C., who knows nothing about movies, bootleggers, New York—indeed, nothing at all of life except Ridpath and the Court Memoirs—was a bit puzzled. But she could see that he wanted to talk, so she asked a question just to help him along.

“Yes,” he said, “it did. I suppose you know—or maybe, happily, you don’t—what a wearisome muscular exertion is involved in trying to think about abstract matters. You can feel an actual thrilling and tensile alertness in the obscure muscles of the cortex. Something the way an electric wire might feel when the light is turned on. Well, when I had taken this gin all that feeling was abolished. Thought became perfectly unaware of itself. I saw the movement of civilization slowed down to its component gestures. Wonderful, oh wonderful! I think I know now why philosophers and poets go mad. That’s the way they see things. Do you remember that line of Stevenson’s, ‘*And methought that beauty and terror are only one, not two*’?

“But imagine it,” he went on. “I saw the passion, the momentum of New York in a grave sluggish rhythm, solemn as a great elegiac ritual. I could see significance in all the strange wonders that ordinarily flash past us in a twinkling. Expressions of loveliness and mirth and embarrassment and anger, that flit over faces and are gone,

these I saw posed and held long enough to be studied and admired. I saw Time, the sculptor, in the amazing process of carving Life. I saw the reporter over the swift chattering keys of his typewriter. I could see his hand poise and float above the keyboard, softly balanced as the wing of a gull. You'd have thought he was writing the most exquisite philosophy in the world. I could imagine I saw the quick thoughts of men slowly coiling and rising like heavy smoke. I saw the crowd of commuters when the train gate opens at the Long Island Station in the evening. Instead of that multitudinous pour down the stairway, I could see the mass gently lip over the top step and descend as softly gradual as cold molasses. I could see the actual face and contour of clownish ecstasies and solitary despairs. I saw two people saying good-bye. Did you ever see that, as it really is?

"The bootlegger was right. It won't do. It won't do to look upon the itemized flow of life. You become aware of the rhythm of it, and it terrorizes you. Everything becomes beauty, and there's nothing more appalling than that. It heats the imagination till it splits like a roasting chestnut. Men are quite right in moving as fast as possible. You've got to go some to get away from yourself. But how lovely they are when they're unaware of themselves! I saw a girl mailing a

letter, at that bronze box in the Telephone and Telegraph Building—I always have to attend to that letter box, so many people use it for mailing Christmas cards. You'd have said that she wasn't thinking of anything in particular, but no work of art ever dreamed could be more lovely than the slow stretch of her body as she hovered up on tiptoe to reach the slit. She was so perfect that I could tell she knew she was doomed. You know, that was it. I saw the solemnity that underlies every movement. I saw an audience beginning to laugh at a musical comedy joke. My sensitized eye caught the gradual coming and mounting and breaking of that poor guffaw, like a big wave crumbling in from sea. Phew, that was terrible! Never again. You know how it is in a sleigh. You've got to go fast over thin ice. Well, that's life itself. Thin ice. When you begin to monkey with the Time-sense you turn things either into a hasty farce or else into a Greek frieze."

"I hope you didn't catch a chill," said Mrs. Claus. "I'm going to mix you something hot."

She bustled up, dropped her knitting and creakingly leaned down to retrieve it. Santa watched her with humorous impatient affection. His optic nerves still retained a faint aftermath of the drug, and he was able, as she hastened anxiously toward the pantry, to slow down the image of her moving figure, and see it in ponder-

ously retarded tempo. He chuckled. But he remembered the enormous relief with which he had felt his hallucination begin to wear off. Gradually, gradually, he had seen the panorama resume its wonted swiftness, abdicate that lovely swooning dignity, resume its charming absurd hilarities and grotesqueness.

"No," he repeated to himself, "it won't do. Life has got to synchronize itself with the customary adjustment of the mind. And the mind mustn't climb out of the stream and sit on the bank to watch consciousness go by. You mustn't try to split up Time into pieces for all you find is little nasty bits of eternity. Men are determined that life should be amusing, and to be that it's *got* to move fast."

He still thought hungrily of that miracle he had seen: the grave airy dancing of creation, treading softly its dark measure to unheard, undreamed music. He saw again the slow lineament of desire, the leisurely miracle of women's grace, the insane gaiety on frolic faces, the sorry grin of cruelty, the tenderness that returns with dusk.

Mrs. Claus came with a steaming jug.

"Well," she said cheerily, "I'm glad you had such an interesting time. And what did you decide to give them this year?"

"I wondered a good deal," he said. "I wondered whether to give them another Conrad to teach

them pity, or another Anatole France to show them how to mock themselves. But what I did give them was the greatest of all gifts."

He paused and drank down a glassful of hot toddy with a shudder of content.

"I gave them the privilege, for just one day, of not thinking at all."

BAEDEKER FIBBED

I RESOLVED to renew at Cherbourg the marvels of Egypt," says the inscription on the statue of Napoleon, where the plump little emperor sits on a horse whose antic would probably have unseated him in real life. He does not specifically say which of Egypt's portents he proposed to revive; though by his gesture we gather that he means the vast stone breakwater on which shines the star of Baedeker, guiding pilgrims from afar. Myself, I was inclined to believe that a certain Swiss concierge (himself a true Bonaparte in physique) was a reincarnation of the asp. But nowadays, when we are more wonted to great engineering projects, the real astonishment of Cherbourg is the endless caravan of Americans who flit feverishly through the town without halting to draw breath. The Swiss concierge, in his field-marshal's uniform, harries them a little, inflicts a few cicatrices on the right-hand trouser; but most of them escape.

In the summer season the big liners come in from New York two or three a day. Every few

hours you see the long strings of railway cars marked ÉTAT lining up along the quay to take the passengers to Paris. Our fellow countrymen come shuffling down the steep gang plank from the tender—perhaps the tender *Nomadic*, or the *Traffic*, or the *Lotharingia*, or the *Welcome*—names so much less imaginative than the *Sir Richard Grenville* at Plymouth. After a brief frenzy in that little blue-and-white-striped shed of the *douane* where the whiskered, cloaked, and sworded *apéritif* officials look so much fiercer than they really are, they climb into the train. At once they fill the restaurant cars and order wine; or you see them sitting patiently in the first-class carriages watching the dusty quay and throwing their money to the ragged urchins who frequent the *gare maritime*. The lovely little town that lies across the basin is hidden from them by the shed. And after all, hasn't Baedeker told them that Cherbourg is "comparatively uninteresting"? So, unless the ship happens to arrive in the evening, they all buzz straight on to Paris. If they land late they go to the Hôtel du Casino, one of those amusing nodes in the great network of travel where sooner or later you inevitably encounter someone you know. There M. Minden, the courteous manager, will greet them with his dark, melancholy, and secretly humorous gaze; and eventually teach them that the first syllable

of the town's name is not without significance. Sometimes, coming downstairs toward nine or ten in the evening, you'll find the quiet little lobby suddenly buzzing with a new lot. The *Berengaria* is in, or the *Olympic*, or the *President Harding*. You'll see them sitting in the bar-parlour having a snack before retiring, or looking hopefully for a new copy of the New York *Tribune*. The only French client I ever saw at the Casino was a luckless lady just in from the States who had been abroad so long she had forgotten how to order wine. She came into the bar breathing exultation at her escape from the *régime sec*. Then, as the expectant *garçon* waited for some order expressing the soul and talent of a connoisseuse, her face drooped. She couldn't think of anything . . . and ordered a grenadine—which creates in a French bartender about the same enthusiasm as asking a Liggett soda-twister for a beaker of lukewarm goat's milk.

But by the time you come down to breakfast you'll find that the overnight batch of Americans has already sped onward. Cherbourg has resigned itself to this state of affairs: so much so that if you tell them you intend to stay there awhile they'll hardly believe you, and unless you watch your baggage piece by piece they shove it on the Paris train anyhow. (*Crede experto.*) Those Americans who are still in the hotel when you enter the

dining room are perhaps making themselves obnoxious to the head waiter because there aren't any hot breads. As I was sitting happily with my *café complet* I could hear one elderly gentleman crying bitterly, "Hot rolls, hot rolls. I want 'em red hot!" Why do our friends go abroad at all if they expect everything to be exactly as at home? It is these creatures who account for that deeply submerged glitter in the manager's eye, and make travel so much more expensive for the rest of us. At any rate, Cherbourg is not such a bad place to study one's fellow citizens, for you see them at a moment of crisis when they are very keenly conscious of their nationality. With an almost defiant air they insist on talking English to the employees as though to prove and ram home the fact that there really is such a language.

I shall never forget the thrill and charm of that late arrival. It was one of those long June twilights when the *Lancastria* dropped anchor inside Napoleon's Egyptian *digue*. On the tender, anxiously attempting to gather into one corner his various baggages, paterfamilias was naturally too troubled to have a chance to enjoy the view of the harbour that lay so lilac in the evening light; though there was, subconsciously, as one's eye noticed that long solid line of stone houses which fronts the sea, the odd realization that foreign countries are real after all, which quaintly surprises one

anew at every visit. By the time we had got through the customs, rescuing all our pieces (save one, containing of course the baby's most urgent affairs) from being "expedited" to Paris, it was close on eleven o'clock. The Cherbourg *douaniers* and porters work like demons at that time of night, "expediting" one to Paris, for not unnaturally they are anxious to get home and to bed. And when the boat train, with a wild scream, had left, and there was a chance for the rest of us to be chalk-marked, all hotel omnibuses had gone for the night. Nothing remained but a baggage *camion*, on the front seat of which, together with the chauffeur, the Swiss Napoleon, the nurse, and the four children, Titania and I rode triumphantly round the corner to the Casino. Shortly afterward, piloted by a chambermaid, we again found ourselves in open air, under stars, crossing a gravelly courtyard. Quite a surprisingly long journey it seemed. Up a winding stair, in a distant annex, we found some very clean little rooms with a jovial aroma of chlorides and windows opening above the beach. With magical rapidity a tray of hot chocolate and bread and butter was "made mount" from the kitchen, and it fell to me to administer these delights to two small damsels (aged five-and-a-half and three-and-a-half) who had been hastily thrust into one large bed. They gargled down some of the chocolate,

inquired eagerly, "Is this France?" and fell into nescience. So I finished the chocolate and the crackly bread with plenty of curly whorls of pale unsalted butter. At about the same time, in the dining room downstairs, one of our fellow passengers was saying, "Some of that doughy French bread? No, thank you!"

I am always for arrivals late at night. You can't see your surroundings, and the next day you wake into a new world. From my bedroom window eight hours later I looked out upon the sunny courtyard of the hotel and an ancient in a blue apron cutting grass with a scythe.

The Casino—where we stayed two weeks—is perhaps a little symbol of the whole matter. There is one wing of the establishment which is the hotel proper, devoted mostly to the one-night ravishment of Americans. But then you pass through a little door into the casino itself and are in France. A terrace with blue tables fronts the harbour and the pebble beach; behind this is a dance hall where a very gay and violent little orchestra gives an *apéritif-concert* every afternoon. The tiny Citroëns and other queer boat-shaped miniature automobiles keep driving through the courtyard, and the *bons bourgeois* of Cherbourg drop in afternoons and evenings for dancing and *petits chevaux* and even (twice a week) a Paramount film shown on a very minute screen. The

operator was very proud of his Paramount films, and assured me that America had produced some very great film artists, such as "Bebe Danyelss" and "Guillaume Ar." It took me an appreciable ponder before recognizing the name of the latter. At the *apéritif-concerts*, where you sit with your Raphael-citron or your café-cognac watching the dancing, you enjoy the cheerful French habit of taking the whole family along for an afternoon sip—grandmother, babies, and the dog. It would be nice to believe that the young men are all poets, for those broad-brimmed black hats and something odd about the shape of their trousers certainly suggest it. But all this gay and harmless life of the casino goes on quite apart from the hotel which the tourists see. It is always like that: there is a little door which divides the France that is exposed for the traveller from the France that goes placably about its own concerns.

But of course the real life of the town is across the revolving bridge, past the upper basin where the Polish square-rigged corvette *Lwow* is lying, past the docks where the English tramp steamers are taking daily the endless stream of crates of new potatoes. Across the bridge you find the taxicabs drawn up, a compact little squadron, and among them, if you are fortunate, perhaps you'll find Lucien Le Cornu, kindest of guides to the enchanting old towns near Cherbourg. His only sorrow in

life is that a hundred and fifty Americans have gone touring in his car and taken photos of him but have never sent him a print. This has now been rectified. If you don't find Le Cornu at his station at the bridge-end, the thing to do is to go to the Café Continental near by where they'll give him a *coup de téléphone*. M. Le Cornu was a god-send to us; he is friendly, reasonable, a keen enthusiast for the old architectures of Normandy, and his French has a special clarity and penetration into the unaccustomed transatlantic ear. He has a delightful humour too. Our first week or so at the Casino, we, with four urchins, were somewhat the oddity of the establishment; but then arrived a very wealthy New Yorker with six children, several maids, five cases of Walker-Gordon milk, and occupied most of the ground floor of the hotel. The next morning, before he departed for the château he had rented at Dinard, I saw him musing pensively among his mountains of impediment which filled the lobby. This is where M. Le Cornu enters the anecdote, for a fleet of seven limousines was deployed in the courtyard to transport the party. Four of these were loaded with the baggage, and of this freight squadron Le Cornu was commodore. While the passenger detachment sped to Granville for lunch, Le Cornu halted his heavy quartet at Lessay for a brief *déjeuner*. The four thirsty chauffeurs sat down at

the scrubbed wooden tables of the little Hôtel Félix; the natives crowded round to inquire the meaning of these four vehicles packed inside and out with trunks, baby carriages, golf bags, and what not. It must have looked ominously like another flight of King Louis Philippe; and indeed on that very day President Millerand was vacating the Élysée. What is it, what is it? cried the troubled Normans; for the French are always subconsciously prepared for some sort of *crise* or *coup*. Lucien took a long pull at his cider. "Well," he replied gravely, "you've heard of the American kings—the cattle kings, copper kings, petrol kings? This is *le roi des bagages*."

Excellent Lucien! I still seem to hear the clear yelp of his rubber-bulb horn as he twirls through those Norman villages, taking us to Barfleur, or Valognes loved by Barbey d'Aurevilly, to Greville where Millet was born, or past de Tocqueville's château near Cherbourg, which surely ought to be a place of pilgrimage for Americans; or to Bricquebec, whose Trappist cheese you'll do well to sample, and to the Nez de Jobourg, that fine rocky beak blown by the Atlantic wind. Well named Le Cornu: you know the canorous double note of those French motor horns, the exhale and the in.

But we were crossing the bridge and entering the town itself. Perhaps it would tempt the ladies

to linger awhile in Cherbourg if I confided, on Titania's authority, that they'll find in the Rue du Bassin one of the world's best coiffeurs; and not to make it too easy I'll only give the translation of his name, Mr. Burningfire. More frequented by me was the little photograph shop across the way, where I see good Mme. Vaslot's face of almost agonized intensity as she listens wildly to my French, wondering what unforgivable syntax is coming next. Then, with a sudden radiation of light she grasps my intention. I had seen, in her window, a printed placard remarking how many *situations presque inénarrables* can be preserved with a camera. "*Mais, madame,*" I tell her, "*toute la vie, c'est une situation presque inénarrable.*" She applauds. This leads us on to discuss a small dog that is in the shop, who has had his tail cut off flush with his rump. He is trying, in spite of this—can we say handicap?—to express his pleasure in the good society where he finds himself. I attempt to carry on my argument. "*Voici, madame, encore une autre situation presque inénarrable. C'est bien cruel de couper comme ça, le petit chien se trouve embarrassé parce que la queue c'est l'organe des émotions chez les chiens, son organe de sensibilité.*" With a rush of syllables she and M. Vaslot approve this doctrine, and hasten to explain that it is not their animal but a neighbour's. Their pretty young daughter.

embroidering behind the *caisse*, is politely trying to smother her grins.

After a round of the bookstores—where perhaps you may be disconcerted to find *Tarzan des Singes* in the window, flanked by *Rip, l'Homme Qui Dort* *Vingt Ans*, and where you buy your Petit Larousse, that heavy but indispensable little travelling university—it may well be that you stop in at the American Express office to say hullo to the agent, Mr. White, and change some money. If you happen to be interested in books and plays, Mr. White is just the man to gossip with, for he used to be chauffeur to Mrs. Deland and also to Winthrop Ames. Mr. Ames used to have him read play MSS. now and then, and I was tempted to get his opinion on a script of my own that was in my trunk; but he was giving me nineteen and a half francs to the dollar, and I didn't want to do anything to lower the rate. Or perhaps Titania lures you into the Grands Magasins L. Ratti (M. Ratti is the Wanamaker of Cherbourg) to buy a waist for the Urchin. Here the hilarity is extreme when it is discovered that French urchins wear a kind of webbed corset with which their smallclothes are kept aloft; there was great grievance in the Urchin's bosom when he was made acquainted with this garment. I have promised it shall be quietly dropped overboard before we lift Sandy Hook again. A little quiet

study of the wine merchants' windows provides good suggestions of new vintages to ask for. Vin d'Anjou, for instance, which costs two francs twenty-five per bottle in the town, though it rises to five or seven at the hotel. (At hotels where they cater to Americans it is hard to get them to serve you *vin ordinaire*. The little man with the green apron comes for your order, and unless you are very stiff with him he'll send you something with a label on it.)

To be perfectly fair all round, Titania and I went one evening to a meeting, presided over by the Mayor, held by the *Ligue Nationale contre l'Alcoolisme*, followed by an uproariously bad movie, "The Double Life of Dr. Moraud." But the film kept breaking and finally they quit with it unfinished, just at the point where the luckless Dr. Moraud, eminent surgeon and secret helot of *eau de vie*, is about to trepan the fractured skull of his son's fiancée; but on the way to the hospital, while his motor was having a *pneu* changed, he has dodged into a groggery to indulge himself. He totters to the operating table with palsied hand . . . here the celluloid snapped again, and the Mayor got up and said that the operator had had such trouble with the machine that they would have to call it off. Without any of the ironical booing we should have expected, the large audience rose calmly and sifted out. The French

take their movies very tranquilly and, odd as it may seem, on a warm clear summer evening they prefer sitting outdoors and watching the sunset, fishing along the docks, or sipping the Raphael-citron that is the favourite bourgeois *apéritif*.

In fact, the "light sane joy of life," as Kipling said in his famous poem, is very evident. It seems based on a certain calm acceptance of necessary facts of living, a simple and hardy jocularly in plain pleasures that is sedative to those who have too long accustomed themselves to the Broadway temperament. The stone hamlets of the Cotentin, original home of so many of our race, are now as gray and lichened as Jobourg's Nose itself. There is something very pitiful about those rude thatched dwellings taking shelter under the pent of a gorse-gemmed hill. Life is reduced almost to its animal rudiments; the ruddy old women jogging back from Cherbourg market in their high-wheeled carts have an almost speechless tranquillity, lulled into a warm doze of the wits by the lyric humming of thin little telephone wires in the breeze. The dusty byways are patterned with the nailprints of their frugally bossed footgear; on the very soil one reads the mark of their pious and necessary thrift. Larks, little mounting flutters of song, keep earnestly pushing up the sky for fear it will tumble. By the village churches are the washing

pools, always with a cross or sacred effigy to bless the wholesome work; the women kneel to paddle the linen just as they would kneel to pray, and hardly know one from the other; nor does it greatly matter. Surely the great clerics need not be alarmed at the government's withdrawing its embassy from the Vatican: the church's share in French life is not pillared upon embassies. And if they all wear black when they approach the church, what race has more reason to? See the little war monument at Barfleur, where the names of seven Renoufs of one family are written on the stone. It makes one wamble a bit to think of the million villages of Europe, all those frugal people going about their hard and harmless concerns, cutting their hay and arranging their local fêtes with the children riding on a *petit manège* (or merry-go-round) turned by hand, and meanwhile the pride and stupidity and harassment of politicians can slide the whole thing toward fiendish catastrophe. Then one can understand better the grimness of the Communist placards, pasted on the stone walls of country barns, calling on the *ouvrier* and *paysan* to throw out their bourgeois deputies, and hallooing generals in the Chamber as "*assassins*."

We spent one long sunny and windy afternoon at the Pentecost horse races, to which all Cherbourg turns out, from the neighbourhood aristocrats with silk hats and field glasses to the old

gray-eyed peasant women in their lace-and-linen coifs, and hundreds of the coloured Senegalese troops in their scarlet bellhop caps. These amiable savages are so absurdly like the American elevator boy that it seems grotesque to hear them jabbering French. I suppose they make in a year about what a New York hat-checker pockets on a Saturday night;—but I don't know that they're less happy. One consoling feature of human life is that wherever you go you find the people quite innocently certain that to be where they are and to do what they are doing is the normal and sensible thing.

But as agreeably revealing evidence of the French enjoyment of simple pleasures I clipped a little piece from the Cherbourg paper, describing how *La Musique* of Hainneville, a sort of singing society in the suburbs, made its first picnic of the season. I please myself by translating with faithful literalness:

At 1 hour 30 the musicians, assembled on the Place de la Mairie, announced by the execution of a morsel the approaching departure for Urville; then, in the name of all the members of *La Musique*, a magnificent object of art was offered to the leader, M. Henri Avoine, on the occasion of this first expedition. Very much touched by this gesture of sympathy, M. Avoine renewed his promise to do all his possible to develop and lead to worthiness the work undertaken.

At the issue of this little manifestation, *La Musique* put itself on the road, followed by about 120 persons, whose number continued to augment all the length of the traject, attaining approximately 450 near Querqueville, and that in spite of the storm, menacing more and more.

All went well as far as Urville, where the excursionists arrived toward 4 hours.

Unfortunately the storm, which burst out almost at once, hindered all the world from taking its diversions, whether on the beach or in the various quarters of the coquettish little town of Urville, and one had to content himself, after the crust-breaking, by making a ball in the interior of the spacious restaurant Renard, when it might otherwise have taken place in the open air, in the superb shrubbery of this establishment.

The return effectuated itself in some excellent conditions and without the least incident, the rain having completely ceased to fall and the gaiety not having ceased to prevail during the whole traject. Toward 8 hours 30 *La Musique* reëntered triumphantly into Hainneville, having been acclaimed everywhere on its course, going and coming.

Wherever you wander, through the astoundingly ancient crooked lanes of the town, sometimes among smells that explain the French passion for perfumery, you find yourself led back toward the harbour. To me, since childhood, docks and railway sidings have always been the most fascinating places to prowl; at Cherbourg you have them

both in one. Along the *digue* beyond the *gare maritime* one can study the constant movement of the harbour: pilot boats coming in and out, the fishing fleet with amber sails, and also see the restaurant cars cleaning and getting ready to cater to more Americans. Apparently the stewardesses of those cars live in them and cook their own meals, for you'll see them, bare-legged, early in the morning, washing down the woodwork, a little waver of smoke coming from the kitchen stovepipe. If it's one of those bright mornings of early June, as blue as an alcohol flame, the railway men who are off duty will be down on the shingle, paddling. Frenchmen always seem to be able to take a few hours off during the day to go wading. Very likely they are picking up kindling; for when the Urchin and I wanted a billet of wood to make a toy boat, we scoured the beach and environs for many furlongs without finding a single scrap. Finally we had to go to the boatyard and beg a small piece left over from the fishing smack *Bienheureuse Thérèse* which they were building. But if you don't find any bits of wood lying idle on a French beach, neither do you find any house-keeping refuse. Some of our American seaside towns might well be named Cannes.

Cherbourg is justly proud of her harbour and proud of her shipyards. When the *Mauretania* was overhauled there lately, on account of a strike in

the English yards, there was great exultation in the town. Then, on her first succeeding voyage, a propeller dropped off. This elicited an editorial in the Cherbourg *Eclair*, pointing out that no work had been done on the propellers while the *Mauretania* was in the *chantiers* of Cherbourg. In fact, said the editor, perhaps it was exactly the fact that our Cherbourg workmen *hadn't* overhauled the *hélices* that caused one of them to falter under the excessive strain of the hitherto-unheard-of celerity at which the vast vessel was marching after the invigorating repairs made to the machine by our expert mechanics. Local pride, happily, is the same all the world round.

Titania would never quite agree with me as to the fun of patrolling the railway sidings, reading the *étiquettes* on the freight cars. But that is how I learn my French, such as it is. The study of posters, advertisements, municipal notices, all sorts of random *affiches*, I find more useful than a phrase book. I didn't begin to get the hang of the subjunctive until I found it on the label of my matchbox. "*Ne jetez jamais vos allumettes avant qu'elles soient entièrement éteintes.*" And sometimes the bills-of-lading pasted on the sides of freight cars will tell you more truth about what's going on than the daily paper. While some of the journals were expressing alarm that the first thing M. Herriot and his "bolshevik" government

would do would be to evacuate the Ruhr, I found freight cars loaded with gun carriages marked for *l'Armée sur Rhin*. For the most part, though, I found those quaint little wagons (with their famous legend *Hommes 40, Chevaux 8*) loaded with matters more to my pacific taste: potatoes and carrots from the Farmers' Syndicate of Barfleur, or officers' horses from Saint Lô coming to take part in the races.

Meditation along these docksides gave me excellent opportunity to fortify my verbal resources. Amply provided with nouns of all sorts, my methods of putting them together in trains of speech are as primitive as the French way of shunting freight cars with an elderly horse. It was on the sidings of Cherbourg that I invented my trick to avoid the embarrassment of genders—always use all nouns in the plural and without qualifying adjectives. Do not say, for instance, *I love this old church*, for then you've got to know whether "church" is male or female. Say rather *One loves churches*. This lends a plain and even a quite lofty flavour to one's style, full of an eighteenth century tincture, a Ben Franklin aphoristic and moralizing touch that must be soothing to the French ear. And indeed one is perpetually charmed by the infinite courtesy with which they hear us mangle their pronunciations. I was trying to imagine what would be the English phonetic equiva-

lent for some of my utterances. When I ask the way to a village church it probably sounds to the native as though someone said to me, at home, "Ow wass it pleeze pozeable for locating ze sharsh?" These difficulties, and one's necessary limitations to the simplest formulæ (avoiding all *situations presque inénarrables*) have their charms, however; particularly for one whose trade is to deal in language. One uses one's own tongue so glibly, the words arriving in the mouth almost unconsciously, that it is an enormous advantage to study seriously, at a mature age, the actual hooks and couplings by which a foreign speech is put together—how, to pursue my railway metaphor, these little baggage trucks of nouns and adjectives are made into trains, conjunctioned to the engine of a verb, and puffed off to carry their cargo to some destination. You find yourself looking (with a new respect) at an English sentence to remind yourself just how it is done. Was not one of the secrets of Mr. Conrad's rich appeal that he always dealt with English in the tenderness of one to whom it came not by birthright but as a long arduous acquisition? So you go about your rounds in the town, picking up a phrase here and there, sticking in a subjunctive now and then for good measure, acquiring the dainty technic of shopping, and blundering in and out of places that look for all the world like square-meal restaurants but

which serve only liquids. "Don't the French ever *eat* anything?" cried Titania in despair, one evening when we had tried three or four cafés looking for some supper, but could find nothing but *apéritifs* and music. Of course, one learns the stunts in time; just as the pipe smoker can even learn to inure himself to that Scaferlati tobacco; but at first the instinct of the foreigner leads him with unerring certainty to do the wrong thing.

Our dallying in Cherbourg was not mere indolence, nor due entirely to the picturesqueness of the town. There we were solidly based on two of the very few bathtubs in the Cotentin—a great advantage to travellers with small children—and these large china receptacles constituted our G. H. Q. while prospecting for a summer home farther down the coast. That was why we covered so much country with M. Le Cornu, and as an introduction to French ways of living and thinking I urge house-hunting. You see innumerable domestic interiors of all sorts, and you learn, away from the life of hotels, how wrong are those travellers who insist on thinking of the French as rapacious. I recall one of our early expeditions when we passed a travelling coffee vendor, sitting on his little cart which was being pulled through the dust and hot sunshine by two hardy mongrels. His dogs were both so like an animal I was once greatly attached to, a certain Mr. Gissing, that I

couldn't resist asking him if it would *déranger* him if I took a photo. He was quite pleased, cried his dogs to a smart trot, and came gaily along while I snapped the lens. In the subsequent palaver he spoke very fast and with a difficult accent, saying several times that it was very warm, and something about a *bistro* a little farther along the road. This I didn't quite grasp, but supposed he was suggesting that having taken his picture I might now stand him a drink. But when I began to haul out some money I was embarrassed to find that he had been offering to treat *me*; and this though we had spun past him in a car and probably looked to him like millionaires. The situation was painful, but we got by it all right, and he accepted, after some protest, a five-franc note. He said it was too much money for a drink, but I insisted that the dogs also should have one. And at this moment the Urchiness created a diversion by falling into a deep ditch of water hidden in the long grass at the roadside. When we left him our friend was sitting happily at the *bistro*, enjoying—if the sign was to be trusted—*Consommations du Premier Choix*.

By now, of course, settled householders in a Norman village, Titania and I know the essentials of rustic etiquette. We know how to bicycle into a strange hamlet, pick out the most promising café, and take our lunch sitting at a bare table in the

kitchen, looking into the mouth of an enormous fireplace where a kettle of sausages is simmering over a charcoal fire; where the bare table is spread with knives and a huge haunch of bread, and you get your share of the great platter of vegetables that goes round to the teamsters and others who are on the adjoining bench. And you see the copper utensils on the wall, the war helmet in the place of honour over the hearth, and the mother-of-pearl clock. The two-franc *pourboire* you leave behind must not be given as a tip but as a gift to the small girl who watches shyly from the corner. These delicacies of deportment were beyond us in our early days in Cherbourg; but it was M. Le Cornu, I think, who set us on the right road. If you will note what are the hostelries approved by Baedeker, then you can find us at the opposite end of the town. Never, unless you introduce the topic, will your hostess admit that she knows you are foreigners. But she gives away her awareness by one invariable sign: she'll ask you if you would like to have tea with your meal.

And now, as I look back at my memories of Cherbourg, it is evening, that soft, gradual dusk; and though it may be drizzling a bit you stroll along the docks. Across the bridge, now out of use while the lock gates are open, the special train for Paris, crammed with the *Berengaria's* passengers, is just pulling out. Waiting for the bridge to re-

open is a whole cross-section of the French provinces: the tiny trolley car with two girls as conductor and driver; the workman with his string bag carrying home two bottles of wine; the market cart with the dog underneath doing his best to help pull; small boys in black pinafores; a woman in *sabots* with a fishing pole; a little Citroën (like a yacht's dinghy on wheels) with a little man in it, equally minute and dapper, on his way to dance and game at the Casino. Those delightful little Citroëns! Even the name sounds fragrant, and I feel sure they ought to smell not of gasoline but of perfumery. Nothing is so precious as those first impressions of a foreign soil; never again are your eyes quite so sharply alert to the valuable comedies of contrast. And those passengers whom I see now, rolling in their lighted compartments toward Paris, may perhaps be right in hastening so wildly toward the capital. But I have a strange feeling that all the breath and essence of France may not necessarily be in Paris; and sometimes one wants to do one's devotions singly, not among other thousands.

And so when the time came to leave Cherbourg it was with the surprised feeling, not at all anticipated, that one had made a new friend, a friend who could not henceforth be omitted from one's happy memories. On that last evening, smoking a pipe along the quay, I met a young man from the

real-estate agency who had joined some of our excursions and had been specially patient with our absurdities. We had a stroll together, and his English being about on a level with my French, we promised to correspond each in the other's language. His letter happens to be in reach of my hand, for I have been using it to prop up one leg of my typewriter, the table in the thatched cottage where I am now writing being a bit uneven. I take the liberty of copying a bit of it, as I can think of no better testimony in honour of French friendliness.

Do you remember [he writes], of the nice evening passed in Jobourg? A evening like that one was too short. Yes, because it is always very tedious to leave some nice people. I think the little Christopher [he means the Urchin] is pleased to pass her holidays in the beautiful country of the France. I want he must be enjoying of the France and of the French people for he must be latter a friend of the France. I think, dear sir, that you can manage with your French. I think so because you speak already very well. May be after your stay in France it shall be impossible for you to speak English. It must not.

I am pleased to send you this little letter and be sure if you may be I am a friend for you.

I think that the typewriter will march very steadily with that little wad of affectionate sim-

plicity for a support. A common phrase in France nowadays is "*Plutarch a menti*"—"Plutarch lied." You see the book of that title in all the bookshops. And, as far as Cherbourg is concerned, Baedeker lied too.

WHEELS ON PARNASSUS

THE bicycle, the bicycle surely, should always be the vehicle of novelists and poets. How pleasant if one could prove that a decline in literary delicacy followed the disappearance of the bike from American roads. After eleven years without one, here I am in a country where the bicycle abounds. My memory returns to old Shotover, the tall green curio I bought in England in 1910. She had a queer double frame, much stared at by rustics from Basel to Auld Reekie, from the Cotswolds to the Wash. Delightful British pushbikes, some of them even used to have multiple gears. Not that I am disloyal to the automobile. For I know the peculiar thrill of motor cars, how one learns to love the steady drumming of their faithful organs, the gallant arch of the hood as it goes questing, like a sentient creature, along dazzling roads. Yet in a car you are carried; on a bike you go. You are yourself integral with the machine.

The bicycle is to me a kind of symbol of those old careless days long ago. How cheering to find still posted, on country inns in France, the em-

blem of the Cyclists' Touring Club of which one was once a member, and whose little identification card was accepted (Oh, simple days!) as a passport. One always sought out the hostelries with that sign, because they were supposed to give the members a reduced rate for "bed and breakfast." And how they hated to do it. One wonders if the young French person on that Rhine steamer remembers herself of the three eccentric youths with the C. T. C. badges. She was a damsel of rather free manners, just the kind of person Jean Jacques was always encountering on his travels. The C.T.C. emblems roused her curiosity, and she asked what they were. "Mademoiselle," replied one of the trio, "it is the Club Terrestre de la Chasteté."

And speaking of the C. T. C., has everyone forgotten the jolly old L. A. W.—the League of American Wheelmen? That too had its literary flavours, for was not Mr. S. S. McClure editor of its magazine?

It is when you come back to bicycling, after long dispractice, that you realize how exquisite a physical art it is. Once more that strong tightness of the thigh muscles, once more the hot sun on the shoulder blades, the odd shift in bodily *tenue* when you have to push on foot up a long hill (comparable to the flatness of walking after skating, or that uneasiness in a ship in still harbour after days at sea). As you spin down aisles of hedgeway

you can ponder the daintily equilibrated poise that makes those two wheels your obedient Siamese twins. I read once of a savage chief in Africa who was given an old bicycle and a top hat, in exchange for a caravan of ivory, I suppose. He traversed the sunbaked paths near his village riding the one and wearing the other, hallooing with innocent glee. I can understand his feelings. If one wears a hat at all while biking it might as well be the silk cylinder of fashion, to express a sense of psychic and carnal welfare. In a recent play, *Roger Bloomer*, one of the characters remarked, "I wear a silk hat as a charm against passion." The bicycle also is an amulet against various disorders. To see before one a forked or meandering road, a wedge-towered Norman church in the valley, to explore the fragrance of lanes like green tunnels, to hear the whispering hum beneath you and the rasp of scythes in a hayfield, all this might well be homœopathic against passion, for it is a passion itself.

But these letters are adjured to have some bearing on literary matters. So let's take this turning on the left (which leads across links toward the sea) and sit on the dunes to think out our rearward idea. A warm southwest gale is creaming the surf onto the beach; the sandy turf, sheep-cropped, is speckled with small pink and yellow flowers.

An odd feeling comes sometimes to a writer who has long carried in the knapsack of the mind some notion that he wants to put in ink. It is a sensation I can only describe as *Getting Ready to Write*. Those phantoms of imagination, so long halted frozen in mid-gesture, begin to show marks of animation. In my particular case, it is now four and a half years that I have seen them sitting in their absurd unchanged attitudes. No wonder they are stiff: one of them (what a dear she is!) told me her foot had gone to sleep. They are sitting round a table, it is a birthday party. You would think that the cake must be very stale by this time, the little red candles guttered out. But no: I can see them burning steadily, the bright untrembling candles of a dream. Even in the puppet postures where I left them I can see those phantoms strangely show an air of expectation. Something must be done about it.

In these moods bicycling seems perfectly the right employ. It is all very well to say to yourself that you are not thinking as you wheel serenely along; but you *are*, and that sure uncertainty of the cyclist's balance, that unconsciously watchful suspension (solid on earth yet so breezily flitting) seems to symbolize the task itself. The wheel slidders in a rut or on a slope of gravel; at once, by instinct, you redress your perpendicular. So, in the continual joy and disgust of the writer's work,

he dare not abandon that difficult trained alertness. How much of the plain horror and stupidity is he to admit into his picture? how many of the grossly significant minutiae can he pause to include? how often shall he make a resolute fling to convey that incomparable energy of life that should be the artist's goal above all? These are the airy tinkerings of his doubt: and as he passes from windy hill-top to green creeks and grazings sometimes the bicycle sets him free. He sees it all afresh: nothing, nothing has ever been written yet: the entire white paper of the world is clean for his special portrait of all hunger, all joy, and all vexation. In the sunny market-place, sitting on a warm stone under the statue of the *poilu*, he feels that noble thrill of living and being surrounded by similar life. Even ants in an ant-hill feel it too, I dare say.

Blundering with a foreign language there sometimes comes a moment when you find, astonished, that you have talked for a few sentences fluently and without conscious choice. Just so, in unexpected purities of feeling, you are aware that for an instant you might almost have stammered a phrase or two of the strangest foreign tongue, the universal cryptograms of beauty that legislatures are too busy to hear. This was the language, for instance, that Llewelyn Powys glimpsed between the lines when he read Matthew Arnold in the

wilderness of Africa. He tells about it in his glorious *Black Laughter*, a book richly written, with the savour of an old, old speech; one of those rarest of books, a book written not in dialect but in English sound and sparkling from the ancient cellars of the language.

So you climb on your bicycle again, renewing in your nostrils the summer sweetness of this divine and anxious land, and swim off with the Southwest at your back. What a book it would be if one could truly write just a straight record of one human farce. What an audacious book, with the title *For I so Loved the World*.

THE SENSE OF SIGNIFICANCE

THE field at the top of the cliff, overlooking the sea, has been shaved; cut down to short, soft stubble, blanched and sweetened by the sun. The skylarks who nested in those cool tangles of long grass have moved elsewhere, I suppose; perhaps to the fairy isles of Chausey that notch the western brim. Chausey might well be a sort of Penguin Island. After watching its purple stains on the skyline through a month of clear sunsets, it was rash to pay them actual visit. Rewarded rashness, though, for even in a drizzle there was no disillusion in those seaweed-matted clumps of granite, joined by webs of sand into one continent at the ebb, insulated again at high tide, a sprinkle of surf-banged crags. A tiny strait serves as harbour for a few smacks; there is an abandoned fort (of Napoleon III's era); a stone chapel with the customary ship model hanging as flattery to the gods of gale. Even the dour château of M. Renault, the automobile magnate, suggests that special tinge of feeling that one describes as Romance. One remembers it was not far away, in

similar scenes, that Victor Hugo found his *Travailleurs de la Mer*.

So the blue scissorings of Chausey, seen from our seaward cliff at sunset, have not lost by visit their fairyland suggestion. Even are they more precious by memory of the homeward voyage, when the *Mouette* (an open launch of fifty feet, carrying one sail) wallowed and capered in a drenching southwester. Unsheltered, the crowded passengers sat trickling, and in more violent rollings were hardly appeased by the master's remark "*N'y a pas de danger, n'ayez pas peur !*" Always alert for the frolic French subjunctive, I remembered that it is used chiefly in expressions suggesting uncertainty and doubt. Ladies were ill, even quite hardy masculines aware of that quaint impulse to yawn which is the token of an entrail not wholly stable. But excellent is the stoicism of the Gaul. A stout grizzled gentleman wearing the ribbon of Madagascar campaigns many years ago, who had lunched on shrimps, rhubarb confiture, *Calvados* (brandy made from cider), and other notables of Norman picnicking, was faintly tinct with green under his summer tan. Yet when a special spout of spray came inboard down his nape, he merely shifted a little on sopping quarters and remarked "*Ce n'est pas chic.*" He is a rather famous Parisian modiste, which somehow makes his phrase all the more pleasant.

The tall cliffs of Granville were a welcome sight looming through pelting squalls, as our *Mouette* came boiling and staggering under their lee.

On these grassy headlands, idly watching the profile of the old fortified rock a mile away, there is much to ponder which is not idle. Studying the long bend of the gulf beneath, the various tinting of sea, the brown-purple shadow masses in distant scarps of cliff, a writer is tempted to envy the pictorial artist who has his fundamental material so seizable, so suggestive, so takeably to hand. The story-teller's job seems desperately more nebulous. Totally from gossamer nothing, your effect shall be contrived; without even the dexterous physical amusement that helps to keep the painter absorbed and happy. Against that sword-coloured sky, vast with the empty glimmer of evening, you are promptly aware of human mirth and movement as a silhouetted pattern. How, out of all that confusing richness, to choose the exactly necessary trifles that will propose the desired emotion? One can only fall back on the instinctive Sense of Significance, that subtle and massive intuition that must be (for every type of creator, I suppose) the captain of his seven deadly senses.

The Sense of Significance! Yes, that occult and instantaneous decision that certain gestures, certain random incidents, are necessary parts of the artistic composition of our own world. This

instinct is capricious and quick, often one is puzzled to know why such petty observations come full of meaning, magically confluent with the dark undercurrent of the mind. I can only illustrate by mentioning shortly a few poor silly glimpses that seemed to me lately (I did not know why) to have peculiar magic. It is hard to be so terse; but as that excellent Abel Bonnard said the other day, "*Il n'est pas mauvais de s'exercer à parler en bref de ce qu'on aime.*"

At Plymouth: my first sight of England in eleven years. The *Lancastria* at anchor under the green steepes where Drake played the world's most famous game of bowls. Coming down the cabin alley I saw a gull poised outside. He floated there on wings, framed in the brass circle of the porthole, looking at me with a cruel fanatical eye. Just behind him was the little harbour where the *Mayflower* set sail. Was there accusation in his look? "What have *you* done to justify the faith of those tough yachtsmen?"

On a great spread of beach at low tide; a warm vacant afternoon, the smell of hay blowing down from the cliffs mixed with the strong acid of the sea. Far above, continual twitter of larks, the ear unconsciously sharpening itself to follow their wiry tinkle to the height where it blurs with your

own blood-stroke. In that sunny vacuum of feeling, a chime from the church a mile away. The wave of deep sound booms overhead. Then, after the passage of the note, a smaller following vibration, an actual quaver of air felt rather than heard, a magically secret ripple in the blue, the gently churning wake of those thick pushing clangs. That infinitesimal tremble, swimming in soft space, was like hearing the actual movement of some strange law of life. A French lady told me the other day that on that beach, in a certain slope of sunlight, she had seen one of the bathers apparently surrounded by a halo of brightness. I know that one afternoon I went far along the coast, toward a weatherbeaten house that stands solitary by the sea. It had beckoned me since I first saw its outline in the distance. When I got near it I recognized it at once. I had seen that same house, or at least one sufficiently like it, a year before, in a dream.

A heavy tinker's wagon, drawn by one horse. Underneath, harnessed to the axle, a small terrier, pulling mightily, doing his best to help along. His tongue hung dripping, he strained fiercely at his leather hitchings, his tail curled upward with delighted enthusiasm. Why did that dog suddenly strike me as full of parable? I looked again. The wagon was going down a steep hill, and both horse

and tinker were doing their best to hold back the load against the grade. But their valiant consort was still doing his forward possible, as usual.

Bicycling in a green woodland, round a corner, I found a little avenue among trees. Bordered with flowers it led to an oddly fantastic house, an old stone mansion that had been built over with modern additions. And above the front door, a large statue of seated Buddha. Reading Montaigne one afternoon in the garden, I heard a melancholy chanting outside the wall, the slow shuffle of feet passing by. So many songs and oddities go down a French village road that presently one is too incurious to look out; besides, I was absorbed in the good old gentleman's apologies for his stupidity, his ignorance even of the names of the vegetables in his garden. But I heard our old Julie click the latch and look out. What is it? I called. She came to me with a grave face. "A funeral," she said; and added, with a certain relish, "*Un enterrement de première classe.*"

But nor sunset ponderings, nor reading Montaigne, will help one much in trying to set in order the task that he has planned. These things abide the fortune of the inkwell. Even Montaigne must sometimes have laboured and brought forth a mouse.

THE LATIN QUARTER

(1924)

IT'S amusing to come back after twelve years to the little book-lined Rue de la Sorbonne with its tinny chimes and tiny hotels; and to find the old Gerson, that seemed so darkly wicked and Murgeresque in one's student era, really so placid and respectable. How adorably satanic we believed it in those rainy spring days of 1912! Even the staircase was an *escalier à tire-bouchon*: a corkscrew—six steep spirals to be climbed, but a real *gradus ad Bohemiam* which gave an agreeable sense of unbottling the bright vintage of hilarity; though the three young men in the attics had little need of real corkscrews. Cocoa was their frugal brew, cooked for themselves. With excited awe they gazed into that grimy little courtyard at the rear, where a young woman used to come to the window, in occasional lustres of sunshine, to shake out her long hair and bask herself in smallclothes. She had merely been shampooing, I dare say: but these lads asked themselves, with

all Mark Twain's eagerness, was this the fabled *grisette*? But there are few Rapunzels nowadays. That virginal notion of the gay sinfulness of Paris, inalienable conviction of every Anglo-Saxon youth, can never quite be recaptivated. The transplanted Greenwich Villagers who are said to frequent the *Dôme* and the *Rotonde* probably degust the same ecstasy. The half-world (so those logical students of 1912 figured it) would naturally be divided into two quarters—the Latin Quarter and Montmartre. They spent their time coasting from one to the other, occasionally pausing (in purple jacket and velvet *béret*) at the American Express office, to give the despised "tourists" a valuable glimpse of Life with the dotted i. Their spirit was as engagingly frolic as that of the fellow in blue jerkin and asses'-ears hood who rides the donkey in the Parchment Fair painting in the cloister of the Sorbonne. If it had been customary to express devotion to this university by sweaters with a large S on the chest, I feel sure they would have worn them. They knew nothing of *Dômes* and *Rotondes*: they wrote their letters at the Café de la Source on the Boul' Mich', because Stevenson had done so at their age. Because they were young libertads, they went to hear Jaurès. . . . And now Le Penseur has left the Panthéon and Jaurès is going there. Murger and de Musset and Baudelaire aren't what the young Latin Quarter reads

now: it reads André Gide. I was going to say something about M. Gide's *Corydon*, but I have just seen a little troop of clear-eyed and divinely placid American librarians trotting reverently into the Panthéon. I prefer not to disturb them with the odd matters that French intellectuals discuss.

It is in a different spirit that the twelve-years-older student revisits the Latin Quarter, the Promised Land of booksellers, where each byway seems one more shelf in an endless library. Certainly not in a disillusion, but in a changed illusion; for life, I hope, is a series of gently shifting hallucinations. The Latin Quarter, where we students feel so instinctively *chez nous*, still has its divine magic. Still, absurdly enough, the sight of those innumerable books, or the pale statue of Comte, the pensive stone faces of Pasteur and Victor Hugo, thrill us to adventure more burningly our own imagined toils. But we carry in our pocket nowadays a little roll of *papier gommé transparent* to mend the brittle ten-franc notes that have such a way of coming in half. It's a kind of symbol.

We have had—in these twelve years—to mend so many scraps of paper with transparent adhesives. We have learned that even the brave life of literature and the arts has its hokums and trickeries. That it is not always the man with the most conical beard and broadest-brimmed black

hat who is the greatest poet. Even the Quarter no longer proclaims the Rights of Man, "in the presence of the Supreme Being," quite so confidently as in 1791 or thereabouts. We have learned that—even along the sacred Boul' Mich'—the best-known products of the American arts are Jackie Coogan, J. O. Curwood, Wrigley's "*frian-dise à mâcher*," and . . . "Esquimaux Brick!" (Poor old Esquimaux Pie! Who would have expected to find it resurrected here?) And we note that the *Nouvelles Littéraires* can be just as carelessly proof-read and as full of pseudo-critical tripe as any of our own literary organs.

But do these little gummed transparencies invalidate our legal tender? Not a bit! Our dreams and amusements are all the merrier. We revel in the ingenuity of fraudulent book-jackets, admiring their sheer genius—*Ce récit galant narquois, qui nous révèle les intimités féminines, fait songer à certains contes du XVIII^{me} siècle. Il en a la forme agréable, la psychologie furtive, les audaces élégantes.* We almost pray for a rainstorm, to perfect the luxury of browsing in the book porches of the Odéon. If, in a famous theatre whose green-room is placarded with photos of managers and authors enchantingly bearded, who *look* so like great artists, we encounter only a dull, dirty farce, does it not set one dreaming all the more valiantly of the piece one imagines from one's own inkpot?

If one's eyes were always in the shop windows, one would miss the little coop on the pavement where an ingenious bartender has put a kennel with a trough of running water—Louigi's Dog's Bar, he calls it. The French are on much more intimate terms with dogs than we, and talk to them more understandingly. Compare Senator Vest's unholy palaver with what Charles Baudelaire wrote in "Petits Poèmes en Prose."—That the French have at least one frankly canine trait, I need not insist.

How one would like to condense, into a few hundred words, the exquisite flavour of the Quarter. In those quiet streets round St. Sulpice I study the windows of undertakers, stationers, pastry cooks, ecclesiastical publishers and tailors. How delightful it must be to get a bill from a French doctor. Thus he goes about it:

LE DOCTEUR G. RIBAUT

*prie.
d'agréer l'expression de ses sentiments
les plus distingués et suivant l'usage,
lui adresse le note de ses honoraires
s'élevant à la somme de.*

Or, if you are a parson and want a new hat, one of those sublime shallow-crown black platters, how pleasant to be able to get one that is marked

Dernier Style. What business has a priest got worrying about the latest style in cassocks and soup-plate hats? This bothered me. In the vacation silence of the Sorbonne corridors, a familiar kind of protest is scrawled on the wall. We can translate it, gently, by "The examiners who flunked me are swine." The incessant ringing of the tramways keeps one hungry: they sound like boarding-house dinner bells at home. One goes back to the little coffee-bar, where the rolls are always waiting, split and buttered, in a neat criss-cross pile, on the zinc counter.

But what is the reason of that curious intellectual exultation that the Quarter gives, that fecundity of impulse it offers to the artist, that sense that the mind is in its birthright element? I think you find its secret best in the Luxembourg gardens. Behind the flamboyant formality of the flower beds, behind the charming heedlessness and enjoyment, is a strange flavour of peaceful melancholy, of incredulity, of impossible hopes. Utterly different from New York, where the mind flows with the moment, here it seems as it were to touch bottom psychologically. There is a background of enchanted despair. The toy yachts are becalmed in the basin and will never come to port. The Medici fountain smells of sodden leaves and is a grand place to be sad. The great dusky Polyphemus looms over the sprawling lovers as

the great laws of life eavesdroop over us all—proclaiming in the presence of the Supreme Being! The young men in black hats are goaded by the most unpleasant passions! (I refer you to M. Gide.) Outside the Comédie Française (the Comedy!) our darling de Musset's statue reminds us that the songs of despair are the sweetest of all.

I wonder if I'm wrong? I'm not trying to express my own feelings, which are trivial and don't matter. I am trying to serve as a film to photostat the genius of the place. In these brilliant Luxembourg flower beds I seem specially aware of this ancient channel of feeling in which emotions run. The Quarter is rich ground for the thinker because it has perfected, and made gracious and proud, the art of being unhappy.

(1925)

I am waiting to hear the chime of the Sorbonne church strike eleven: I wanted to hear it again, to get the right word for it. *Tinny*, which I used last year, is certainly not right. It is a light, cool, insouciant little chime; but I don't catch the just adjective, and can only advise you to listen for it yourself. It is not ponderous nor monitory nor deeply musical: in fact it seems (as I suppose is natural in a Latin Quarter belfry) hardly a religious voice at all. It has in it something of the

accent of Ronsard, something of Diderot, and just a faint clatter of glassware from the zinc café-bar round the corner. I will leave it at that, or it will use up all my space.

Paris would hardly be Paris for me if I didn't hear the Sorbonne bells; though it is disconcerting to hear them striking while you are writing an article: another fifteen minutes gone and you have only descended a dozen lines. And this ground-floor room at the corner of the Place (in case there are ladies in the audience) is the perfect chamber for high-spirited young women. For, if the toy *ascenseur* is "immobilized for reparations," as sometimes happens, there are no stairs to climb; and the passage outside our door is one long stretch of mirrors, where Titania can walk up and down adjudging the effect of a new hat just arrived from Mme. Sorbier in the rue Lafayette. But it grows very chilly toward midnight at the end of September. *Chauffage Centrale* has a genial sound on the notepaper; but when, one wonders, does it begin? If it hadn't been for my well-loved *zinc* (as you are to call a small bar of that sort, pronouncing it *zank*) which is warm and bright and full of Chinamen playing cards, I should hardly have enlivened my fingers enough to write this letter. But the café-crème with cognac only costs ten cents, and makes the most intimate of *chauf-fages centrales*.

ESSAYS

I understand now why the Quarter spends its evenings in the cafés—to keep warm. I should have liked to bring in a small electric heater; but the list of prohibitions placarded on the wall is peremptory:

All degradations in the rooms are at the charge of the guest. It is forbidden: to do cooking in the rooms, to wash linen, to branch any apparatus on the electric canalization and to modify in whatever it may be the existing installations; to introduce any animal or to make cooking come in from outside.

I haven't really much gift for loitering in cafés. I wish I had: for then I might be able to find out, what has always disquieted me, whether the Boul' Mich' prowlers who look so like poets really are. The fellow with the yellow raincoat, and yellow ringlets as long and curly as Bonny Prince Charley's; and the other fellow with the sleek bobbed hair, the tight-waisted coat, the monocle and cane and open polo-shirt; they are still strolling the pavement just as they were a year ago. What I want to know is, how many poems have they written in the meantime? I always have a horrid fear that they will prove to be merely commissionaires for the Phiteesi shoe-store that appals my eye in that sacred precinct; heaven only knows how profound a disillusion it was to my spirit to find that word Phiteesi in the Latin

Quarter: fortunately even the most learned doctors of the Sorbonne probably don't suspect its meaning. But a man who has strength enough left to wrestle against disillusion has not really been damaged; his fancy dives inward and becomes more precious. I cling desperately to the hope that the Chinamen are not the only romantic figures along the Boulevard; that the young men whose signed photographs are thick over the comfortable fireplace in Sylvia Beach's charming bookshop ("To dear Sylvia with just oceans of love") really are geniuses; that these Murgerian profiles are truly libertines and literary critics. You remember O. Henry's little story about the hayseed who looked so obviously a hayseed that no bunco-man dared go after him. But he really was a hayseed. And Walt Whitman teaches me to be cautious. Walt would have been very miserable along the trottoir of the Boul' Mich', for no one would have noticed him. Yet, though he looked so like a poet that few good Philadelphians would touch him, he really was one.—And I don't even believe that Walt's French, deservedly merri-mented by his readers, was any worse than that of the average American in Paris.

But I love to think of the young American of the better sort who comes, like the *naïf* scholar-gipsy he is, to make his pilgrimage to Paris. It is delightful to think of him, scandalized in small

things that he may be, if he has understanding, uplifted in great. He has heard that the book-boxes along the Quais are the shrine of priest and philosopher; and the statue of Voltaire grins delightedly at his amazement to find the work most prominently displayed is "Fleshly Attraction, Translated from the French," carefully wrapped in strong twine. For that is the kind of delightful Vanity Fair and cheapjackery the world is: surely the photograph-pimp wouldn't work so hard unless real Beauty were near by; nor would it be worth while for so many people to dress like poets unless the sources of real poetry were just around the corner. And I doubt if my imagined pilgrim ever buys *Les Belles Flagellantes de New York* even if he sees it every day on his way toward the Place Vendôme to ask for mail. If he has the jocund humour I like to credit him with, he has a smile when he goes into an antique-shop in the Boulevard St. Germain where he has seen some fine eighteenth century leather-bound 12-mos in the window. He finds that they have been gutted to make cigarette-boxes, though still preserving, outwardly, their booklike appearance. He exclaims a little in protest at old books having been served so—"Ah," says the young woman, "they were only religious books."

The sapient pilgrim, if he were wise, would serve an apprenticeship in the provinces; he

THE LATIN QUARTER

should be forbidden even to approach Paris until he had learned such elementary rules as never to allow a bottle of wine to be plunged into an ice-bucket—as the Paris restaurants have debauched themselves into doing under the notion that Americans like everything iced. He should avoid the eyes of Rue de la Paix jewellers peering fixedly over their velvet window-curtains, and should gaze in fascinated horror at the engravers' shops where Egyptian princes have their visiting cards displayed and among them the imposing pasteboard

MONSEIGNEUR GLASS
BISHOP OF SALT LAKE

He should learn first, what the cosmopolitan glamour of Paris is not so likely to teach, something of the unspoiled simplicities of the French countryside. It would do him no harm to hunt out the French equivalent of the old lady from Dubuque. Then he will be capable, I think, of distinguishing the true Paris, who makes herself so scarce for untutored eyes. Then he will see that, faithful to her old motto, this real Paris, loved by all the world's lovers, fluctuates but is never merged. He won't waste his clear sunsets at some rowdy café but will see the little flotilla of toy yachts skimming the Luxembourg basin. Where the woman with a bunch of balloons stands at the

ESSAYS

head of the steps, the light pours through her red and blue globes; seen down the gold-bronze avenue they are translucent like floating jewels. And that mysterious sound of horses' hoofs that often comes at midnight down the narrow rue de la Sorbonne, will grow to have its mystic meaning. It is the tramp'of some pilgrim cavalcade; it is the students of the world, coming as they always came, in faith and hope and gaiety, to the doors of the Sorbonne. Loved as perhaps no other city has ever been loved, our illusions are worthy of her.

THE WORKS OF M. CHAIX

M PROUST has been greatly complimented on his rich treatment of the scruples of human psychology, but there is another French writer, widely read, who is also a master of infinitesimal detail. I refer to M. Chaix, the author (or at any rate compiler) of the *Livrets-Chaix*, a series of volumes not less endless than M. Proust's, and conscientiously revised and re-issued every month or so. M. Chaix's books are not only full of useful information and romantic suggestion, but they are also a whole compendium of French ways of thinking. How charmingly he expresses the French passion for minute codification, for getting things logically arranged and stated. M. Chaix is the real encyclopædist of etiquette—of getting things ticketed. And he makes you read between the lines; between vertical lines, indeed; for his books are time-tables.

But oh, much more than mere time-tables. M. Chaix's *livrets* (one for each railway company) are a synopsis of his nation's genius for getting things down in black and white—and then going

ahead as may be most convenient. The French like to have a thing in writing, just to get it out of the way; not necessarily to adhere to it. Every time you buy a ticket at a French railway station you are reminded (by a placard) that according to the law of 1791 the vendor is not compelled to make change if not convenient. This gives you quite a thrill, seems to take you back to the days of Thermidor and Humidor and Cuspidor. But as a matter of fact, you will always get your change.

M. Chaix has the austerity of a great artist. People like John Ruskin and Henry Adams will try to spoil Mont St. Michel and Chartres for you by putting *their* thoughts into your head. But M. Chaix is never intrusive. All the loveliest places in France are mentioned in his works, but he never tells you what you ought to think about them. He confines himself to the real essentials, viz., how and when you can get there. Henry Adams will din you with his charming palaver about soaring gothic; but M. Chaix soberly states that the trains reach Mont St. Michel at 13:15, 18:5 and 19:30. He evidently worked it out with Mme. Poulard, the innkeeper, as those are just the times to order an omelet. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, by which I mean to say not a traveller misses a connection, but M. Chaix knows why it shouldn't have happened. He probably tried to "effectuate his transit" by way of Ver-

sailles Chantiers, where (if he had read the footnote on page 37) only first-class passengers without baggage were admitted to that train.

But I must give you (Oh! for more ample space) some notion of M. Chaix's attention to detail. It is he who makes plain the uplifting influence of American passengers upon dining-car tariffs. Lunch and dinner in the wagon restaurant, *vin non compris*, cost 7 francs and 12 francs; but in the boat trains, 18 francs. On the boat trains, wine costs $7\frac{1}{2}$ francs a bottle as against 3.25 in the regular expresses. M. Chaix tells you, to the minute, at what time you can eat on every train where eating is possible. Suppose you are going from Paris to Granville and want to lunch in the second sitting. You can eat from 12:15 to 13:47, not a minute longer. He has foreseen everything: if, for instance, you are a voyager of the second class and spend more than half an hour in the wagon restaurant between mealtimes, he knows that you will owe the difference between the second- and first-class fare "for the trajet unduly effectuated."

Let it not be thought, however, that M. Chaix is hard of heart. Whenever children or dogs are concerned, he strikes a note of tenderness.

In principle (he says) dogs are not admitted in the passenger carriages; but the company will place in

special compartments travellers who do not wish to be separated from their dogs. Moreover dogs of modest stature, enclosed in cages, boxes, or baskets, can be kept in the compartments with the assent of their fellow passengers.

I find many evidences of M. Chaix being a family man, for he is specially kindly toward *Nom-breuses Familles*. A Family Ticket of Going and Returning, he tells us, may be had when there travels with the parents a son of less than twenty-one or a daughter of less than twenty-five, and this ticket may also include "the ascendants of this infant; its celibate brothers and sisters of whatever age; two domestics (a male or female cook, a valet or chambermaid or infant's nurse) and if necessary a wet nurse." Below the age of three, he continues, infants pay nothing, on the condition that they are carried on the knees of their family. And among the baggages that may be taken in your compartment with you, he allows babies' bathtubs.

M. Chaix does his best to instil a spirit of foresight and prudence into his flock. I don't suppose any one, in the history of travel, ever followed his instructions for getting a carriage on arrival in Paris. This is what he wants you to do:

Address, 48 hours beforehand, either a letter or a telegram to the Special Carriage Bureau indicating the

station and hour of arrival, the number of voyagers, the destination, and the type of carriage desired, whether automotive or of animal traction.

If you want to reserve a berth in a sleeper, M. Chaix urges you to go even more cautiously about it.

The demand for renting a berth must be made at least 4 days in advance; the applicant must deposit, at the same time, as an evidence of good faith, in the hands of the Station Master, a sum of 40 francs. If for any cause the reservations are not utilized on the day and train specified, the totality of the advance payment is definitely acquired by the Administration.

But I think that even M. Chaix feels this to be a bit severe, for he follows by listing the stations where pillows and blankets may be rented by those who find themselves compelled to make overnight journeys not contemplated four days in advance.

If anything goes wrong in your travels, you mustn't blame M. Chaix, for he has told you everything, even down to listing the stations where only passengers without baggages and "dogs with companions" are allowed to board the train. Moreover he urges you not to be content with his work, but to inform yourself further at the office in the Hall of the Lost Paces at the St. Lazare station. Sometimes you feel he is a bit of a dreamer, as when he

insists that two children under seven should not occupy more than the space of one adult passenger; sometimes even one suspects him of a gruesome humour, as when he says that a voyager may "re-nounce an unaccomplished trajet" by leaving the train before his destination, provided he also renounces, for the benefit of the administration, the full fare paid for the "uneffectuated totality." Yet certainly he discourages this wanton behaviour, and urges his congregation to be sure that they are not paying more than the stipulated 0.4612 per kilometer for first class, 0.3213 for second, 0.2024 for third.

But I perceive, regretfully, that I haven't given you any notion of the special delightfulness of M. Chaix. His little time-tables are like any other great charms of life, you have to come upon them for yourself. The real fun of M. Chaix is when you take him from your pocket, in some little provincial train, and with one eye on the scenery and one eye on his tables, begin to figure out your next change. You look for the station marked *B* that means a *buffet* or the *b* that means a *buvette*; you see that the train will wait 30 minutes because it is market day at Paimpol; and that Savigny is a "facultative arrest." Or you may idle over even more exciting sections: how, by writing to Mr. G. S. Szlumper, director of Maritime Services, berths may be had in turbine packetboats between Cher-

bourg and Southampton; or of return tickets valid from Fat Thursday until Wednesday of the Cinders. For once you learn, with M. Chaix, how easy it really is to travel, you wonder if some day you may not even graduate into his Supreme Work *The Indicator*—which includes the Grand European Trains Express. In that noble compilation you can work out your “trajects”—not merely in France, but to Rome and Vienna and Petrograd and Constantinople. But for the moment this must be our Facultative Arrest.

A PARIS CROWD

ONE of the delights is that you know no one and no one knows you. That free and solitary passage among multitudes can never quite be attained at home; perhaps only in a foreign city where different language and different aspect of things turn the mind in upon itself for its needed reassurance and composure. There is something divine in the sensation of your secret swim through this human ocean. You carry your own heavy and fragile burden of hopes, anxieties, joys, remorse, and you know that you will not, from *café crème* at breakfast to *café cognac* at midnight, encounter any one who has the faintest concern to share or jostle that curious load. So must the gods have walked among men. And you marvel at those voyagers who hasten to inscribe themselves in the register at the American Express office, to have their names and hotels chronicled by the *Herald*—in short, who so readily abandon that most rare and refined of human pleasures, the perfect incognito.

Perhaps the most thrilling crowd in Paris is the

crowd in Père Lachaise—the crowd of the dead. I wanted specially to see again the monument Aux Morts in its little green ravine. There were some particular graves I should have liked to see, too; but I felt it would be the depth of bad manners to go hunting them out with the aid of a plan. In that perfect democracy of silence only the vulgarest of snobs would be picking and choosing, looking for “famous” tombs. It was a gray drizzling day, the stone-ranked hill was very solitary, and I strolled at random, content (so I found myself rather gruesomely putting it) with the monuments I happened to pass. I will be honest: I had a faint velleity to see the grave of Oscar O’Flaherty Fingalls Wills Wilde (I believe he is buried there) because any man devoted to publishing has a natural interest in the writer who has caused more bogus *de luxe* sets than any other (except perhaps Maupassant?). I wanted to see if the Epstein sphinx which once caused such a row was finally erected. But I didn’t find it; and was more than compensated by discovering the tall shaft that the City of Paris has put in memory of her municipal workmen—pipe layers, car conductors, electricians, and others—who have lost their lives in the course of duty.

I don’t know (perhaps Sir Thomas Browne or Lord Bacon were the only prowlers who have known) exactly what one feels among these crumbling of mortality. What is our æsthetic of the

dust? Is it a small and shamed superiority, to be still topside the gravel? or is it even more disgusting self-pity? At any rate, that noble Aux Morts, unspeakably beautiful tableau of human grief and courage, sends one away with the thoughts "of things that thoughts but tenderly touch." What a thrilling suggestion it gives of our poor final dignity. You see the dying as they approach the end: they come crouching, haggard, stooped in weakness and fear; but at the sill they straighten, shakingly brave, to face that shut door. The man, more sullen or more fearful, still hangs his head. But the woman's face is lifted, and her hand is gently on his shoulder.

If one tries to be honest, he has to be cautious to note where genteel sentiment begins to slide into mere self-concern. After an hour or so of rambling, Père Lachaise begins to weigh on the mind, and crush the purest æsthetic. You are no longer, as the excellent phrase is, disinterested. That congregated mob of the dead is jumbled in an order as rigorously fantastic as names in an index. (Why should the man who invented gas-lighting have so much smaller a tomb than Napoleon's generals who adjoin him? But come to think of it, perhaps his real monument is in Lamb's essays.) You begin to feel an uneasiness, and speculate on the words *Concession à Perpétuité* cut in so many stones. Yes, you say, we must all concede to Perpetuity;

but in the meantime, where shall we have lunch? If you feel the pricklings of self-pity, I think it sanative to pause on your way out to look at the grave of de Musset, the enchanting poet and wit who was so gorgeously sorry for himself. He asked to have a commiserating willow over his tomb; and I noticed that the growth of the tree has made it necessary to cut away part of the stone, removing one of his own poems that he wanted engraved there. There is a kind of hint in this. More loyal than the willow, his dear old sister sits chaired in stone just behind him, faithfully holding a volume of his poems in her lap.

The preceding paragraphs were written three weeks ago, and have been lying here on the table. If the two merry little chambermaids of the Hotel G—— could read English—as I know they can't—I wonder what they would make of them? But perhaps chambermaids in the Latin Quarter are too sagacious to ratiocinate about the guests. They sit in their little pantry at the foot of the stairs and chirp like canaries; and when you come in, both run out (some day some social scientist will explain why French chambermaids always move in pairs), exclaiming excitedly that there was a telephone call from "The Lady at the Ritz." I wish that the best of life were not so inenarrably humorous! I should like to tell you how two telephone calls (you must take my word for it that the inci-

dent was excellently innocent) vastly improved my status at the tiny Hotel G——.

But I'm glad the earlier sheets lay unmailed, because my notes on the sense of secret solitude in Paris require supplement. They were written when my wandering had been done mostly in the old streets of the Left Side. I have learned since, pleasantly enough, that along the Avenue de l'Opéra or the Rue de Rivoli one is certain to encounter friends from home. That peculiarly intimate feeling of utter anonymity is very real and precious, but like all human sensations it quickly passes into a new phase. Apart from the chance tangency with friends, whom one may welcome either for merriment or for advice, it is remarkable how quickly the transplanted life puts out its new fibres, makes its unconscious adhesions, begins to think of the old women in the newspaper-kiosk or the man behind the coffee-bar as its natural associates. It is not far wrong to say that two of the most amazing phenomena in Paris are the number of Americans in the region of the Opera, and the number of Chinamen along the Boule' Mich'. For the latter phenomenon I have no explanation, unless they have fled the chop suey restaurants of Upper Broadway. My friend the Old Mandarin (who is here, too) notes that these young Celestials wear the biggest and broadest-brimmed of the black hats, that they talk French fluently, and are

greatly esteemed by the girls of the Latin Quarter. Certainly there are enough handsome women in the world to go round, and I am the last to complain: yet some faint residual shred of race instinct causes me a mild surprise when I see a merry young Chinaman with a smart French damsel on each arm. Coming from America, the land of vehement taboos, one is greatly struck by the Parisian freedom from the cruder forms of prejudice. They really seem to dislike no one but their own politicians.

But it is a city, I still feel, uneasy in its inward heart. The statue of the boy offering masks for sale, in the Luxembourg Gardens, is rather symbolic. In his string of faces there is not one that is tragic. Doesn't that contradict your notion, a friend says, that Paris is anxious inside?

I don't think so. What is the purpose of a laughing mask?

JULIE

THIS is Julie's afternoon off. At three o'clock the old coachman, with curly white moustaches, clicks the latch of the garden gate. Julie is ready, in her best black apron and the black felt slippers. Her mysterious little packages, treasures accumulated during the past four weeks, are handed up to Monsieur Lecellier with the warning that they are *bien fragile*. A hat that Titania has given her; some bits of barley sugar and a baby's dress—for the children of her six nephews who own a fishing smack in common; the chintz-covered bottom of a broken trunk tray that has greatly taken her fancy, and the elephant teapot (with his trunk for spout) that Monsieur and Madame brought her from Paris. These, and other small increments, she asks me to inspect, so that I may be assured nothing is exported that does not belong to her. I have tried to persuade Julie it is not necessary to ask our permission every time she wants to eat anything. Accustomed to the manners of American servants, the first time Julie asked if I would permit her to take "a morsel of

bread with some butter," I thought it was irony. But far from it. Julie cannot eat or drink with relish until she has had specific assent from above for every item. She used to bring her plate into the dining room, asking me to put her food on it for her. But I suppose we have debauched her by our constant cry, "*Toujours, Julie, vous prendrez tout ce qu'il vous faut.*"

The hat that Julie is taking with her will go, presumably, to one of her grand-nieces; for Julie, when she wears anything on her head, carries the white linen coiffe of the region. The elephant teapot, I surmise, will lead a carefully guarded life. "*Voici, Julie,*" said Monsieur and Madame, "*c'est un peu symbolique, cela servira pour vous faire penser de la famille américaine qui était comme un éléphant sur vos mains.*" But it is always dangerous to touch the sentimental note with Julie, to hint at possible partings. With sudden wetness in her fierce blue eyes she vows that she would not dream of *using* her elephant teapot. "It's sacred," she says. "It's going in a little corner that I know of." To ease the moment one has rapid recourse to stratagem. "*Dans les soirs d'hiver, Julie, vous pourrez prendre votre tilleul dans l'éléphant.*" Julie knows that when *tilleul* is mentioned it is the signal for a laugh. *Tilleul*, a kind of tea made of lime leaves, is her favourite infusion. It smells and tastes like a fragrant hayloft in summer, and she

recommends it for every bodily weakness. Monsieur, however, mocks himself of it. Never mind, she says; in fifteen years you will be glad to have recourse to that good *tilleul*.

She climbs into the carriage, gasping a little as she balances on one foot, and drives proudly away to town, to see her two older sisters and tell the latest news of her strange American *patrons*. Only once a month can Julie be persuaded to take a couple of hours off, and then chiefly because she has to visit her *propriétaire*, to pay the rent of "the little corner she knows of." Her wages mustn't be given her until she is all ready to embark; she might lose them. The small black purse is firmly gripped in that strong, laborious hand. Her fine golden-gray head is grandly erect as Monsieur Lecellier drives to town. Life is rich in comely humours, and it happens that Lecellier is her next-door neighbour in the Rue St. Jean. And to be driven up that cobbled lane, arriving in triumph with her bundles, must be good medicine for many days of distress in a long, hard life. What fun it would be, did manners permit, to follow her and see exactly what happens.

In two hours Julie will be back, and come hurrying over to the nearby *chaumière* (forgetting, in her innocent eagerness, that it is forbidden ground: *c'est là que Monsieur écrit son livre*). She is anxious to see if Monsieur and Madame are still alive and

well after two dangerous hours unmastiffed; and to report that her sister has sent a present of three pots of jelly. "*Ce pauvre Monsieur! Il n'a jamais assez de confiture.*"

How can I tell you about Julie? It cannot be done. But since we live by attempting the impossible, I can take a few symptoms of her vivid human decency. Where shall we begin, then? At the very bottom, with her feet.

It is the sound of those valiant feet, their busy shuffle to and fro, that I think of most affectionately. Toward the middle of the afternoon, when the white canvas sandals are discarded for the soft felt slippers, Julie's feet begin to play an important part in the household. An occasional groan is heard. Then it is not amiss to suggest: Julie, you had better repose yourself a few minutes and drink a little *tilleul*. This has to be said rapidly, round the corner of the door, or Julie may want to show them to you. Once I didn't get away fast enough (it is amazing how rapidly she can get started on a conversation) and there they were. "*Ce sont bien propres,*" she exclaimed; and indeed they were like ivory. How that does good, she rejoiced, treading them about on the cold stone flags. When one has sixty-four (years, she means) one has *mal aux pieds*. But unless you daily suggest it, Julie will not repose herself even for five minutes. From before six in the morning until after ten at night, those

faithful members are on the go. Perhaps it is along the garden paths, where her fury of washing covers every rosebush with blanching linen; perhaps it is on the road to the farm round the corner, where on muddy days her sabots go clopping for eggs and milk.

Let's try the other end of the picture. Julie is a champion talker. She loves noise. Doors close like artillery; plates come down on the table with a crash. Anything done silently rather frightens her: if you open the kitchen door without preliminary voice or footfall, she whoops with alarm. When our tiny *salle à manger* is packed for *déjeuner*—Monsieur and Madame, three children and Mademoiselle—the din is unbelievable. Every dish is placed with commentary and suggestion. Sometimes Julie tries heroically to restrain herself, for occasionally she has a faint surmise that Madame would relish a little less clamour; but then she hears something said (in our atrocious French) that interests her. She puts her adorable old head on one side, lays a finger against her nose, and waits—with all the excitement of a pleading dog—to catch my eye. This rogueish gesture is irresistible. I look up (if I didn't she would leave the room in tears) and she begins to volley foghorns of talk. At last Titania finds an opportunity to ask for the spoons. "*Ah, je vous fais mal de service !*" the good creature exclaims, conscience-smitten. We all hold our

JULIE

breaths, thinking now we are settled for a moment. But the Urchiness takes this opportunity to try a few words of French, and Julie bursts into a shout of applause. "*Ah, qu'elle est jolie, ma petite cocotte adorée, ah qu'elle est mignonne !*" Titania knows, wisely enough, that Julie is not one of those who can be compressed into the rigid mould of conventional domestic service. I only wish it were possible, without offence, to reproduce some of her more excellent ejaculations—on the virtues of stewed figs or (anatomically gestured, on her own person) the dangers of bicycle riding.

How happy an artist would be if he could get Julie on canvas. He'd have to do it while she's shelling the beans outside the kitchen door, almost the only time she could hold a pose. Though I'd like to have her as she's vigorously swinging the lettuce in a little wire basket, shaking the water from the leaves. Her handsome blonde head is bent forward, her strong white forearms flash in the sunlight, she rocks a little on her big haunches. I hope I haven't given an impression of a humble, respectful creature; Julie is a true Norman sea wife, with the stubborn pride and thrift of a rocky coast and the sea wife's horror of storms. "*Fermex bien les portes,*" is her last cry every night as she toils up to the attic. "*Nous aurons du vent. Un triste temps !*" In spite of her horror of frogs (they come hopping into the house every evening from

the garden) she will go out to pick pears in the dark and sit late to cook them, having heard a chance remark that stewed pears would be nice for breakfast. Her merciless tirade can be heard a hundred yards down the road if she imagines that the *épicier* has not given Madame his best and at the lowest price. Yet a word of reproach can fill her with black despair. She is one of those who will suffer anything for love but not raise a hand for coercion.

One who has always known England much better than France finds it specially interesting to see these Norman types so akin to the English in form and spirit. In the very look of their villages one seems to see the knotty cradle from which so much of England sprang.

AN OLD HOUSE IN BURGUNDY

BETWEEN two great rivers that run almost parallel but in opposite directions, there are two hill-ranges, the Morvan and the Côte d'Or. Between these hills there is a tranquil region of upland valleys, rich in ruined castles, where the streams are uncertain whether to decant northward to the Seine, or westward to the Loire, or southeast to the Saône. The cider of Normandy, the yellow wine of Anjou, the purple of Burgundy, here balance as ultimate destiny. It is not only the watershed of France, it is the wineshed. But, however geographers may map it, there is no doubt in the region's own sentiment. It looks toward the Mediterranean and the South. When the Reds of Marseilles marched to Paris, they were nowhere more warmly welcomed than at Saulieu. From the vineyard slopes above Beaune, in clearest weather, Mont Blanc can be seen floating in the sky. So they all say, at any rate, and so Stendhal and many others have recorded, though it seems astounding: the peak must be 125 miles away. I could only see the pink roads the same dusky pink as the inward staves of a wine-vat; and the church

in Beaune that is the shape of a bottle. For when you cross that ridge of the Côte d'Or and come (through a village called Bouze) down vineyard slopes in a hot September sun, you are among the world's most famous grapes. The rapid opening and closing of the straight vistas between vine-rows, as the car spins by, makes the fields change and shimmer like twinkling silk. As you study the wine card at the inn at Beaune you can meditate those historic names: Volnay, Pommard, Corton, Chambertin, Montrachet, Clos-Vougeot . . . Clos-Vougeot to whom one of Napoleon's commanders made his regiment present arms when they marched by. It was another military man (Camille Rodier's great work on *Le Vin de Bourgogne* tells the story) who always drank his burgundies in a glass cheese-bell. For it is the Burgundian theory that wine should be drunk in a vessel large enough to admit both mouth and nose simultaneously. "*Ce n'est évidemment pas très élégant, mais une nouvelle série d'odeurs perçues par les fosses nasales sera la b n fice,*" says Camille Rodier. The glasses set out by the inn at Beaune are not quite as wide as cheese-bells, but very nearly. I now understand more clearly how it was that Mr. Hamish Miles three times began a letter to me, a year ago, when staying at Beaune; and three times desisted, overcome with sleep. He finished the letter a month later, in London. It was a powerful letter, and con-

cluded by quoting the wine card of the hotel, where you will find written: "*Ce n'est pas à dire que l'amateur de Bourgogne soit toujours un homme supérieur, mais c'est un être essentiellement perfectible. C'est un humaniste, sinon en substance, du moins en puissance, car on remarquera presque toujours chez lui un souci d'élégance dans l'expression de la pensée, un amour des bonnes lettres, de l'éloquence ou des arts.*"

Yet it was not of wine that I intended to write, but of an old house in Burgundy; an old house lying in that valley just west of the Côte d'Or hills, deep-set in such peaceable calm as only an inland valley can give. I should really call it a château, for such it is; but to the usual American connotation that word is too likely to suggest a place fantastically ornate. I would not mar its perfect sober dignity by a misleading word.

It is curious how hard it is in words to convey the simple serenity of that old house, with its conetopped towers duplicated in the broad still moat. Nervous and apprehensive as we are, there is something guilty in the way we shrink from describing peace. Dignity and serenity are the words, perhaps. In that roomy building of stone floors and great oaken beams life seems to shine as clear, as rich, as strong, as colour through stained glass or through the dark wines of Aloxe and Savigny that ripen in its cellar. In every plain doorway, in every

curve of stone stair or twist of ironwork or slope of mossed tile roof, there is the sense of long tranquillity, decent and friendly and kind. But there is something happier there than mere tranquillity; a feeling of renaissance, of convalescence, as of an old loveliness that had fallen into misery and decay, and now finds itself in hands that can support and reënliven it. At the back of the fireplaces, when the blaze is going, you can see the emblem of former seigneurs: a right hand, lifted open, palm outward. A Glad Hand, we can call it, emblem of a beautiful name, Suremain de Saiserey, which sounds as though it meant something like A Sure Hand to Hold. But the surest hand may relax when there are no heirs to carry on.

Sometimes Americans seem the appointed lovers and custodians of European secrets: there was some strange blessing at work when (armed only with a postcard photo from which the name had been cut off) my friend the Caliph ferreted out this old house—which the owners were prepared to sell piecemeal and where poultry was kept in cages on the big stone stair. Looking across the moat on moonlit evenings, where the shadow of thirteenth century towers lay black-pointed on the meadow, there was no sound except the splash of wakeful carp. Sitting by candlelight to study eighteenth century vellum-bound account books (there was a cowhide trunk full of old records of the house) or

hunting up the story of the romantic young poet who loved the château and ran away from home to fight for Poland and died young; or admiring the portrait of the Duchesse de Foix, in a scarlet gown and green-gold mantle, gaily holding a tiny black mask, one knew the old house to be very much alive.

Who shall explain what miracle it is that happens when a man finds just that angle of earth that smiles particularly for him? In the Caliph's face as he ponders the stone facets of his moat-balustrade, or the hipped gables of his farm buildings, or the curved steps that lead down to his bowling green, or the arch of his alley of lime trees, I see the look of a man at peace with life. Architect by profession, his two or three months a year in this Burgundian retreat are certainly no mere vacancy, but a devotion to the bottom principles and honours of his art; from which he takes back, to his office in an American city, freshened notions of that marriage of Place and Time that we call architecture. And what delightful ironies in the situation, he chuckles. Is it not amusing, he says, that a Scotch-American Presbyterian, brought up to believe (almost) that Papists have horns and hoofs, finds himself seigneur of a Catholic hamlet, with a chapel in his own grounds and a village church under his windows where he must provide for sixty-some masses a year to be performed for

his house's ancestors? How is it, he asks, that he feels more at home here than anywhere else in the world—here where he doesn't even understand their language? Like the wise man he is, he says very little to casual acquaintances at home about the house where the welcoming hand shines on the chimneyback. Evasive magic comes to pass when a man's heart takes root, for a few months a year, in a life that is strangely different from his own and yet also strangely blended. It is no mean lesson to have lived, even for a week only, in that old house. One brings away more than memories of licheny stonework rising from a clear mirror of water: a sense that the art of living has sometimes triumphed (and can again) over muddle and distraction; that (as the humorous wine card has it) a lover of these things might even be "an essentially perfectible being." It will be pleasant for the Caliph to think sometimes, in the subway, that a cask of Corton 1919 (the same that we sampled, from a silver tasting-cup, in the dark vaults under a Côte d'Or hillside) is ripening all the long winter months in the cellar beneath the château. He carries the meaning and destiny of that old house deep settled in his mind, like a bottle of good wine.

II

The little river Serein (so I learn from Mr. H. Warner Allen's book *The Wines of France*) di-

vides the vineyards of Chablis, so that the vintages of that region are classified according to whether they ferment on the right or the left bank. It is the same stream which in its infancy makes a clear ring round this old château, on its way toward the Yonne and the Seine.

It is the Serein that idles gently at the foot of this thirteenth century stone tower, where a fire burns behind me, lighting up the open hand cast in the iron chimneyback. Suremain de Flammerans was the name of one of the old seigneurs, and his emblem still shines hospitably behind the flames. This queer old painted room, within walls five feet thick, has been unoccupied for generations. We have sounded all the panellings for secret slides—not successfully, alas; though the house has its mysteries, as you shall see. A room with a stone floor, by the way, is ideal as a study; you can throw your matches and ashes where you please, and brush them into the hearth afterward.

The little Serein, moving softly in its stony moat, is one of this place's most perfect charms. The wind stirs it in parallel scribbles that move round the walls as softly as unwritten lines of verse drift in a poet's mind. Loitering on the bridge, in a forenoon of Meursault-coloured sunlight, I heard Luther Conradi playing in the music room. The rippling notes came trembling out into the sweet September air: a glorious cascade of trebles, gay

and hasty with a downward-running cadence. At once the melody made me think of a little stream slipping and bending on its way; I imagined the Serein and its contributors tinkling down from Burgundian hillsides; and when I asked Conradi what it was, he said Liszt's *Au Bord d'une Source*. A few nights before, he had been playing this composition before going to bed. He woke just before dawn and heard someone in the music room (next his chamber) playing it again. He sat up in bed amazed at the charm and sureness of touch; and then, to his astonishment, the music rippled on to a new and singularly beautiful ending, different from the composer's. In the spell of half-sleep he thought it must be a dream, and lay down again. But the next morning two others, sleeping at opposite ends of the house, said they had heard music during the night. I have heard him play that new ending of the piece as he heard it in the darkness; it is quite different from Liszt's and not less beautiful. It has a curious upward striving, as though the rivulet were trying to flow backward to its unvexed origin.

It is the little Serein, bending round the château, that seems the *motif* of whatever secret music lingers here in unmeasurable vibrations of air. The circle of water binds it in, sets it delicately apart, isolates it with such careful artifice. A tiny stream, so easily crossed: it is really but a few feet of water

but its reflections are so deep! It is a great artist, the Serein: it knows that the way to savour a great silence is to have just a little sound; so at night, through open windows, you can hear it whispering past its overflow; on its way, past meadows and white cattle, toward larger destinies. Here it is like the daily mind of man—shallow itself, but it can mirror the pictures of great things.

Silence is a great part of the life the Serein here encloses. A peacefulness so profound that one wants to retard every slow moment and see it from both sides. Within and without, an old domain like this is a work of art, an art so deeply established that it collaborates with the supreme artfulness of Nature. Nature has the vague impulse, the push; man merely provides the rhyme-scheme, the ABBA. In the oddest variety everything here suggests artistic parables. On a sunny morning the shadow of this tower falls definite and dark across the brown moat. The carp, in a thick cluster, shoal to and fro exactly along the line of that shadow, keeping to the darker side. Is that not art? When the church bell rings, or a clock strikes, it seems always to fall upon the ear exactly at the right moment, at the instant when the apprehensions needed it. The wine stacked in bins in the cellar, to lie there cool and obscure, for years to come—the act of placing it has a ritual gravity. And brought upstairs in its little basket, like a baby in

a bassinette, carefully horizontal, a bottle of Musigny or Corton-Grancey has the full righteousness of colour, bouquet, and *goût* that make it as perfect in its own realm as an ode by Keats. There is no tariff in these matters. Perfection costs whatever you have to pay for it. Indeed the exhalation rising from a wine like Musigny, the ghost of the grape rising in the clear half-empty crater of those vast goblets, is so divine that it would seem the supreme act of connoisseurship simply to relish it in the nostrils and never taste it at all. Nor is it wise to taste rich Burgundies too continuously; the Subscriber in Waterbury who reproached me for an interest in such matters may console himself with the linguistic reflection that *goût* is easily transformed into gout.

I think I had forgotten to tell you about Burgundian clocks, which are amusing. The nearer one gets to Switzerland, I have always observed, the more people are interested in clocks. Perhaps that is because the Swiss, placed by Nature so near eternity, find earthly divisions of Time all the more precious. America invented the alarm clock, which rouses man to his work, and the time clock which keeps him at it. The Burgundian, taking it for granted that a solid citizen is for a large part of his time engrossed in the distractions of the table, conceived the idea of a clock that would strike the hour twice, to make sure of your noticing it

correctly. The first time, while you are toping or gossiping, the clock strikes at random, anything at all, perhaps exactly, perhaps not. But then, a couple of minutes later, when your attention has been called to the fact that another hour has ticked, the number is correctly clanged. Such is a Burgundian clock.

But the thought that the Serein and I were pursuing was that everything here seems (as a printer would say) *justified*: aligned and accurately imposed upon some underlying norm. When Conradi was playing the other evening, I sat near to watch his hands: it seemed impossible that they should err. The musician playing a difficult composition, he said, is always singing it in his mind. In the same way, in rare coalitions of circumstance, some subconscious spirit of just and fine living seems to be singing the complicated counterpoint of our existence. With it all, unless I misconceive the spirit of an old house, one is pervaded now and then by a delightful enchanted sadness. But the Serein has its gaieties too; and Conradi and I are meditating a Moating Song—a form of nautical ballad not yet achieved, I think.

Returning to France revives in the poet, who has not written verse for a longish time, an eagerness to put his notions in rhyme. In the train from Granville to Paris, and again from Paris toward Dijon, the measured charm of those countrysides,

the reddening orchards, white curly roads, neatly shaven plains and stripy hillsides, silver-gray hamlets and the blue curves of the Yonne and aisles of poplar trees, all seemed to suggest and require the old French forms of verse. In the ballade or rondeau the singer spreads his thoughts with the simple orderliness of a peasant sunning linen on a hedge.

And this evening we are going, quixotically, to tilt some Moulin-à-Vent. As one might write on a picture postcard: We are having an uncorking time.

A LETTER TO HENRY

CHESTERTON once said, my dear Henry, that though the British Empire had discovered almost everything else it had never discovered England. Perhaps indeed it is the Americans—some Americans—who are most likely to discover it: for we bring to it so healthy an appetite for just those viands that are the blood and gravy of English feeling. At home, often, our minds are stuffed rather than fed.

You begin to discover England when you get aboard the boat train at the Gare du Nord. Those voices: how adorably indescriptibly odd to the American ear! It is, seemingly, your own tongue, for (to your surprise, after months in France) you find you can understand the fragments you overhear; yet it is said in the most delicious lifting and softness of intonation. As different from our lingo as English grass from American grass. Then, when you go into the wagon restaurant for a cup of tea, you find that the French (with their divine and erring courtesy) have tried to make their guests at home. There are little pots of marmalade on the

tables, and platters of what the Company of Wagon-Lits fondly believes to be toast. And even slices of "plum cake." The other day in Paris a pink-cheeked little English flapper sat next to Titania and me at Smith's tea-room, over the bookshop, Rue de Rivoli, and had a thoroughly girlish snack: ice-cream with buttered toast. Then she called for "A slice of plum cake," and I knew that England wasn't far away. The fields of the Somme were won, not on the playgrounds of Eton, but in the tea-rooms of J. Lyons. You've heard of British Lyons. I can't quite make you understand why that pretty child (her name, I think, was Kathleen) asking for "plum cake" was to me a whole essay on European history.

On the deck of the cross-channel steamer *Riviera*, Boulogne to Folkestone. Is there anything more exciting than seeing, from mid-stream, a dark wet night, the lights of France and England simultaneously? All those lighthouses twinkling away like drugstores on both sides of a wide street. France seems to have the best of it: the light at Gris-Nez is brightest of all. "Do you know, sir," said the charmingly polite English passport officer, questioning me in the smokeroom, "you're positively the first American I've ever met without a middle initial." Only the non-British have to be passported on the boat: there were a few French, several Americans, and a little Jap giggling to

everyone with almost hysterical friendliness. The Englishmen were mostly at the bar, ordering "a small Bass."

What a day, my ancient! At 5:30 of a cold rainy morning, coffee on the far western coast of Normandy. At midday, filet of sole and a bottle of Aloxe-Corton with the Caliph at Marguery's in Paris. Passing through Amiens and Abbéville, that dark devastation which the Wagon-Lits stewards deem tea. In the second-class compartment from Folkestone to Victoria, "a small Bass," while I read in an evening paper, with shame, an American playwright's article explaining why he thinks that a million people should see his play, just opened in London. I had Proust's "Les Plaisirs et les Jours" in my pocket, but I can't read real things while travelling in unfamiliar scenes. I am too nervously and miserably happy. At Victoria I was met by a young kinsman who insisted on coffee and liqueurs. Then the 11:30 train to the moist and fragrant darkness of Surrey. Arriving at Effingham, opposite the Plough Inn there is a little old cottage buried among hollyhocks and cabbages. Lovelace once lived there, they tell me. Beer and books were waiting. How does one sleep, at 1:30 A. M., after a day like that? But I found there the latest issue of the *Saturday Review*, and took it to bed, by candlelight, in a tiny cupboard-bedroom where you lie with your feet almost out

of the little leaded window. I was just dozing off when I found that your compositor had turned my "inenarrably" into "inerrantly." This made me so peevish it woke me up again. I had to turn to the editorial, dealing, as usual, with the Future of American Literature.

When I woke up, the soft September drizzle was pearlying the hollyhocks and cabbages. It's lucky, by the way, that Yorkshire pudding doesn't grow on a bush: one would be given it at every meal. But this was my first morning in England for eleven years, my Henry; and I was going to have bacon and tea. I often wondered why Edna Ferber went out of her way to poop off at English bacon in "So Big." I don't think she knows what she's talking about. Another matter that pleased me, I meant to mention it before, I was reading David Garnett's *Man in the Zoo* in bed in the hotel in Cherbourg, last June, when I found him mentioning "Cooper's Oxford Marmalade." I knew then that it was a good book. Garnett and the Bowling Green, I think, are the only two attempts to get Cooper's Marmalade into literature.

A little later I was in a taxi, on my way to Cavendish Square. I passed some park or other—let's say it was St. James's: I haven't yet recovered my London geography—and something hit me, so hard that I felt ill in my bowels. It was my love for London. I know that good manners impel one

to apologize for loving things. What I'm getting at, old magistrate, is this: don't worry too much about the Future of American Literature. It will come along all right, as any kind of art comes along, when we love things enough. Which doesn't mean blurbing about them, but trying to enter into their secret perils and meanings. And as that dear man H. M. Tomlinson says, when you talk to him about these matters and his face lights up vaguely and he murmurs the rich prose of his mind in a soft crooning whisper, "My God," he says, "you've had Whitman and Melville and Thoreau and Emily Dickinson. Isn't that enough for a century or so?"

When we love things with the terrible shuddering love of Emily Dickinson for her Amherst garden, for instance, literature happens—or else silence. There are a lot of dangerously smart people turning out the New Palaver on our side, with tongue in both cheeks at once. George Gissing would say that we haven't starved enough. I should say we haven't yearned quite enough.

But London, I repeat (you must allow a little lunacy to one coming back after eleven wild years) makes me wamble with love and terror. Paris, divine though she is, seems to fade out and grow dim. Is it because London is so much less eloquent that she seems to have much more to say? That is literally it; and it is the unsaid things that concern

literature. You know the type of Englishman who means most to our hearts: the man with whom it is difficult to communicate, but easy to commune.

And one of the loveliest things about London is, she brings me so much nearer to New York—the only city where I find my own dangerous peace. My heart is blithe to think of our polyglot skyline of insanity. And with all our sins, we have never quite been complacent about her, as some of our friends here are complacent about the London we love as much as they.

All this, you see, has been for me not discovery but verification. It is strangely mixed up with thoughts of a man who really did discover England, and as I came through Kent in the dark I thought how much poorer England is since he sailed. Of course, I mean Conrad. It is strange to think of the incredible wealth of that mind, its memories and brooded insights upon men, its nobly just division of love and scorn, its lonely affectionate simpleness, lost to us for always. Even his gravestone, they tell me, carries his Polish name. When the English think about Conrad, it will make them very generous toward “foreigners”—even to Americans, who have not the charm of real foreigners. But they are already more generous to us than we deserve.

I was passing by the Museum Tavern—opposite the British Museum—just as they unbarred the

A LETTER TO HENRY

door for the noon opening (it is Sunday). I went in, and drinking a tall one of shandygaff and admiring a pink section of ham and a vast slab of cheese (there's something rather good about ham in Amy Lowell's poem about England) which would have done you good to consider, I pondered how to write to you as you deserve. Don't let the too-easy critics wear out their fingers pointing to the scenery, as the excellent phrase is. Literature comes where and when you're not looking for it. Some day, just as some strange shabby bird is passing by, the pub door of Helicon will be unbarred and a Ganymede in shirtsleeves with foam on his moustache will beckon him in.

A MAP OF LONDON

I

I'VE just been looking at the map, my precious old map of London which I bought a fine, dark, drizzling evening in November, 1910, at a little shop in Praed Street, near Paddington Station. It's not likely that I shall forget that evening: it was my first foray into London on my own, and perhaps it was all the more cherishable because the liberty was only momentary: for I had to catch the 9:50 back to Oxford—the famous train (if I remember accurately) which was the latest one could take to be back in college before midnight. (Doesn't one still hear those Oxford hansoms jingling through the dark, clashing round the narrow angles of New College Lane?) So I can plainly see Praed Street in foggy darkness, shop windows bright with invitation, and a gigantic commissionaire in uniform outside the door of some music hall or vaudeville theatre (or could it have been a movie?). And all these intervening years my map, stoutly backed with muslin and with an ingenious mensurated tape for finding any desired street by

an index-number, has been waiting on the bookshelf. It was the first thing I put into my trunk when I came abroad last spring. What fun I would have (I promised myself) re-exploring the scenes of youthful wanders. And then (how delightfully ironical is plain fact) when I actually found myself in London I never had time to open it—except once, hastily, to verify the exact topography of that central trapezoid which is the nub of visitor's London. Oxford Street, Regent Street, Haymarket, Kingsway, and Strand—X'd, like a pair of firemen's suspenders, by Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road.

And now, London being again nothing but a dream, I get out the map and mumble a bit to myself over the places I meant to look at and didn't. I find that I can't even remember the meanings of marks I put on it fourteen years ago. I find a black circle round St. Stephen's Square, Bayswater: I savvy that all right, that's where Elmer Keith and I had lodgings at Christmas, 1910, so cold that we slept in swathes of the *Times* (with the *Literary Supplement* as foot-warmers). And I know what this mark means on Guilford Street, W. C., the most momentous address of my life. But what is this carefully inked blob on Lansdowne Crescent? Did anything exciting happen to me there? I haven't the faintest recollection of it.

What I really got out the map for was to see

exactly where is Bessborough Gardens, which I meant to visit and didn't. In *A Personal Record*, I think, Conrad told us that it was there, in lodgings, that his career as a writer began, while he was waiting for the landlady's daughter to clear away the breakfast tray. And I can understand the scene perfectly: for it is after breakfast in London lodgings, after tea and bacon and toast, to be precise, when you are lighting your pipe and warming the slack of your breeks at a minuscule warmth of coals, that one can feel most easily the flowing movement of mind that presages authorship. I hunt out Bessborough Gardens on the map and find it only a little way from the Tate Gallery (where Epstein's bust of Conrad now is) just above Vauxhall Bridge. It is an offshoot of Lupus Street, just the place where a man might begin writing to keep the wolf from the door. Why didn't I have time to see Lupus Street?

Yet, certainly I am not going to brood upon things I didn't reach, when I saw so much more than I deserved or expected. I wish I could remember the name of the genial old hotel (was it in the Commercial Road? or perhaps nearer Aldgate?) that H. M. Tomlinson pointed out to me as a traditional resort of sea-captains. For my own part, I discovered what is not too common in Europe, a comfortable little hotel with not a single American in it but myself, nor did I even see the names

of any in the register. There was a parson there with gaiters and an apron: he may even have been a Bishop ("solemnly pursuing his bird," if you remember your *Trivia*) or he may have been, like the ecclesiast in Elizabeth's *In the Mountains*, someone who expected soon to be a Bishop ("*Il n'est pas un évêque mais il est presque un*"). When he entered the breakfast room and ordered haddock and grilled kidneys and bacon, and unfolded his *Times* (naturally a solemnifying rite, as it is the Deaths and Marriages that one sees first; and you can't get to be a Bishop without knowing all sorts of people who are likely to be dead) the scene was as English as Runnymede. For England is different from other countries in that it really *is* exactly as it has been described. I have only one fraud to report, and that is the "mahogany tree" that Thackeray wrote about—the table in the *Punch* office where the thirteen lucky editors sit down for their weekly staff dinner. The board was already laid, with plenty of wine glasses, when I was there, but Ewan Agnew lifted the cloth—and it isn't mahogany at all, but a fine old slab of soft deal. If it had been mahogany probably they wouldn't all have carved their initials in it. W. M. T. and E. V. L. are the best carved monograms in the lot. Mark Twain, I believe, remains the only visitor who has dined with the staff: I wonder if they asked him to cut his initials in the board?

Certainly he would have enjoyed doing so. Or perhaps he would have said that two thirds of Thackeray's would be enough for him.

The pubs, as you probably know, shut down at 10:30 in the evening: one wonders what Dr. Johnson would have thought of being ejected from the Cheshire Cheese at that hour? Along Fleet Street one sees none of the all-night lunchrooms that cheer the heart of the late journalist in American cities. The only recourse at that hour is to climb the stairs to a newspaper office where a certain editor sits at his desk eager for colloquy. His stuff has all been put on the wire, but he stays till two o'clock or so in case anything should "break." He has comfortable chairs and he gets out the bottle of Scotch. Then, if there are congenial listeners, you may hear him unfold some of the richness of his alert experience. Robert W. Service happened to be in the other armchair the night I heard the story of the cat. I don't identify the editor himself, for it is his pride that in his twenty years on a famous paper his name has only been printed twice, and then by accident.

He came down from Scotland as a youngster, to look for a newspaper job. He tapped at all the doors and found no entry. His small fund of money soon ran out, and he felt himself beaten. There seemed no room for him on Fleet Street, and one night he wrote home asking for money enough to

get back to Scotland. He went to the post office to buy a stamp for the fatal letter. On the counter sat a big black cat, comfortably licking her fur. In an idle moment the young man held out the stamp to see if the cat would moisten it for him. She did so, seeming to relish the sweet taste of the gum. He affixed the stamp and was about to drop the letter down the slit——

Then he put the letter back in his pocket, ran to a desk in the corner and then and there wrote a brief story about the Stamp-Licking Cat at the Fleet Street Post Office. How the postal authorities, always solicitous of the public convenience, had laboriously trained the animal to sit on the counter and lick stamps for customers. How the cat was specially nourished with a saliva-stimulating diet, and that a project was under way to mingle a little oil of catnip with the government's stamp-gum. And so on.

The first newspaper editor to whom he offered this agreeably preposterous little yarn accepted it with glee. It was the journalistic *coup* of the week. Illustrated papers wired for photos, and the Post Office was crowded with people asking to see the cat. The S. P. C. A. hurried round to see if it was a matter within their jurisdiction. The sale of stamps at that office increased forty per cent. And the author of the story has never since been without a job. It is the story of Dick Whittington over

again, you see. I told you, didn't I, that England is all a kind of fairy tale. It is a different cat that my friend has now in his rooms in the Temple; but also perhaps one with magical powers. For when a Zeppelin dropped a bomb in the neighbouring quadrangle . . . it didn't explode.

The most unconscious pathos that I saw in London was a sign in an Oxford Street clothing shop. RAINCOATS FOR THE HOLIDAYS. (This, remember, was in summer.) And the most eloquent word was the name of the Air Ministry's building in Kingsway—ADASTRAL HOUSE. Which reminds me again of the journalist mentioned above. When the new Bush Building—a terrific loftiness by London standards—was put up at the foot of Kingsway, there was talk of building some living apartments on the roof, and renting them. Our Scot suggested an advertisement to lure possible tenants. "Yes," he said, quoting Stevenson—"Bed in the Bush with stars to see."

II

The American's first instinct is that a lively thunder-storm can't be far away. The spires of Wren point strangely pale among the dark jumble of the City, not unlike the white steeples of New England against a coming squall. That soft lilac light, diluted fuscous sunshine (it lies like honey in tranquil Bloomsbury squares) and shadows in a

hundred blends and tints, surely they are some barometric omen. He almost pauses to listen, among the steady drum of traffic, for muted jars of thunder. But the air is light and fresh; fragrant, even in October, with almost April sweetness. In the bronzing squares it is a tender country whiff, though spiced always with that faint sharpness of London soot. London smoke, a gladness in the nostril, richest of all fumes to a cognoscenting nose. I recommend the great train-shed of Liverpool Street station at dusk as the perfect place to watch afternoon and evening plight their troth, with Smoke as the officiating spirit. Very sensibly did London choose scarlet as the colour for anything official—uniforms, post-office vans, pillar-boxes. One of our dark green letter boxes would be invisible across a London street. “Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold! Bring me my Chariot of Fire!” cried William Blake. (We heard the organ at Canterbury Cathedral playing Parry’s music for those stanzas the other afternoon—not among the “dark Satanic mills” but in the very heart of “England’s green and pleasant land.” It was good to hear Blake’s great madman’s voice exulting in the misty close.) The Chariot of Fire, along a twilight street, is a post-office van.

A man who has only a few days in London would be very silly to spend much of his time writing about it. Better, for the moment, just to let the

mind touch glancingly upon a few visions that seemed, somehow, of an essence. Getting off the channel-steamer at Dover, there was the engine *Sir Bors de Ganis* waiting to take the boat train to Victoria. Somehow a locomotive so named seemed adequate compensation for not having been able to see the chalk cliffs (the fog was too thick). And the train passed through Tonbridge, where I discerned two stations; one called Tonbridge Tub's Hill, the other Tonbridge Bat and Ball. It seemed a just entry into the land that invented sport.

Our first lunch was at Simpson's, off Cheapside, in the famous old Ordinary where the management tries to divert your mind from the amount of fish and eels you have eaten by offering a free meal if you guess the measurements of the cheese. England is surely the only country where fish is eaten three meals a day and again at supper after the theatre. Some enthusiasts even sally out at five o'clock to have a fried fish with their tea. A good deal of cockney wooing is done over platters of fish: the time, the plaice and the loved one all together. The statue of Britannia should wear a fillet of fish. Another gastronomy quite new to me was lower-case potatoes served in the soup. It was at a dinner where Sir James Barrie was at the board, and the host averred that Barrie had been brought up on potatoes in his soup. We all fell to heartily, hoping that the combination might have

the same nimbling effect upon our own wits. Then, when the champagne was poured, a wag across the table begged for a potato in his glass. "I was brought up on it," he insisted. Perhaps (it just occurs to me) there is some meaning in the fact that the two greatest essayists England has had were named for food; and the third is half named for drink. All this took place in a room so lined with portraits by Hogarth that occasionally one lifted one's eyes from the table to remember that the painting of (was it?) the Woffington, "dallying and dangerous," was the one that Lamb had described.

The pearly haze that dreams over St. Paul's—the giant gooseberry as James Bone calls it, with the irreverence of a true lover, in his beautiful book *The London Perambulator*—is at least partly the steam of Sausages and Mashed rising from a thousand little taverns approached through narrow passages. There poets sit among barrels meditating their staves. At a few specially favoured places you can precede your sausage with a sublimation of Spain, which cork forests are grown to honour. The most teetotal of wives would hardly reproach her husband if he said he had lunched on Bristol Milk. It is the noblest of sherries. In the Fleet Street aroma there is also, when the breeze sets from Southwark, a rich gust of hops from the warehouses across the river. A bless-

ing on the hop factors; it is their custom that has kept thriving unmarred one of the very last of the old coaching inns, the George in Southwark, only a few steps from the site of Harry Bailly's Tabard. There, in the words of an eighteenth century bill still framed in the hostess's bar-parlour, customers will find "Beds, wines, spirits and stabling to their perfect satisfaction." The galleries of the inn overlook the yard just as they did when theatrical managers got their first notion from that sort of thing. The site of the Globe playhouse is near by, now built upon by the Barclay and Perkins brewery (a worthy successor; it was that brewery in whose affairs Dr. Johnson was, momentarily, an adviser; his head is still on their bottle-caps). And the Beargarden still runs down toward Bank-side. The Three Hours for Lunch Club has established friendly relations with the George of Southwark; and that noble place has already its American reciprocities. Hopkinson Smith did a charming drawing of the coffee room and gave it to Miss Murray, the proprietress; it hangs there, watching the hop merchants playing dominoes after lunch; and on a table in the coffee room I found a much-thumbed copy of O. Henry's *Strictly Business*. This was surely a surprise. I pointed it out to H. M. T., who was with us. "O. Henry just about saved some of our lives in the war," he said.

It is amusing to find a tiny Temperance Hotel

bravely sandwiched in among the hop-warehouses. And the Club would be remiss if it didn't mention the Riverside Tea Rooms at 49 Bankside, which look cosily out over barges and cranes onto what must be almost the oldest and best view of London, with St. Paul's exactly opposite. It was pleasant to an American eye to find in low-lying Brixton, not far from Little Dorrit's church, the sign *Altitude, Ltd., Steeplejacks*. This was noted on the way to C. Morley and Co., wine merchants. Mr. Morley was unfortunately absent, but his affairs were increased by four bottles of moderate port, purchased on the understanding that his first name, as I saw it last year in the telephone book, is Christopher. His assistant believes it to be Charles, but I am still hoping.

Since we've crossed the river to the beginning of the Canterbury trail we may as well go further. Canterbury, of course, is a Pilgrimage; and a pilgrimage is a journey made to some meaning that one feels is greater than one's self. There is a grave in the corner of a quiet, very fragrant ground in Canterbury, where yellow roses are still blooming in October. And there are two people to whom red carnations have a special meaning in London. One of these carnations, worn that day by chance, but crumpled after a long journey, was still in Titania's coat pocket. "Rest after toyle, port after stormy seas," we read on the stone; then, as we

turned away, I saw her secretly take the flattened little sweetness from her pocket and put it among the many lovelier flowers on the grave.

James Bone, in that very remarkable book about London, the piety of twenty years' close watching and fine imagining, tells the story of a Cockney in Canada who enlisted for the war. In making out his paper he wrote simply *London* as his birthplace, "London?" said the recruiting officer. "Which London? London, Ontario?" "London, Ontario!" cried the outraged exile. "London, the whole bloody world!"

Yes, that's what it is. To the New Yorker its altitude seems limited; but like the potatoes in Barrie's soup, our hearts were brought up on it long before we were born.

L'HOMME QUI RIT

I HAD felt for a long time that it might happen; now it has. But first I must tell you how time and feeling led up to it. Life is always leading up to things; then—as in this case—you find yourself unprepared, and behave disgracefully.

It is the calm, suspended expectancy of autumn that has something to do with it. Over these coasts there now lingers the yellow quiet of October: as you bicycle softly through villages you smell cider on the air—the air that is so curiously mingled: it feels warm and smells cold; and sliding round a dropping bend you suddenly drift into a whole pool of moist chill. Red and yellow apples are piled in the fields; the eyes of donkeys are more wistful than ever; your wheels pass over little prickly mats of flattened chestnut burs—just as they used to in the woods round Haverford, twenty-five years ago, before our chestnut trees all died. Perhaps good American chestnuts, when they die, go to France?

The season of *bains de mer* ended in mid-September, all the visitors are gone, the little town

has settled down—after a disastrously wet season—to the long pull through the winter: you see the tradesmen apprehensively getting ready to live on one another. Old Julie, our tumultuous factotum, will shortly go back to her normal life as a fishwife. I wondered why she was so eager to have the Microcosm's baby carriage when we leave. Now the truth is out: she says it will be fine to sell fish in, *pour gagner ma petite vie pendant l'hiver*. But she must be careful to balance the fish in it just right, as we had to the baby, because it's one of those French prams that shut up suddenly into a kind of sandwich.

It's this drowsed and apprehensive sweetness of October that the *bainsdemerists* miss by going back to Paris so early. Perhaps some day you'll go along the hidden leafy road from Donville to Mme. Lebrun-Hecquard's inn A la Rivière at Coudeville; where you can sit at a small yellow table under the passion flower—that strangely Freudian plant—and have whatever *consommation* you prefer. After your port wine (which the French drink *before* dinner, as a kind of cocktail, and very sensible, too), Madame having lit the fire in the little sitting room, you can tackle chicken *en cocotte* bathed in a noble gravy, and an omelet that has somehow inherited just a faint tingle of onion: nothing so gross as the pearly bulb itself but the misted maiden tears of a young female onion in distress. It was

there, with a bottle of *vin d'Anjou*, that we sat with a poet and his wife and after deploring the lack of reticence in the passion flower, fell upon a discussion of the private life of the Russian aristocracy. We knew a good deal about this, as one of us had employed a governess who had once worked for a Russian grandee: we concluded (about the time the *vin d'Anjou* was finished) that the Russian nobility had led the lives of passion flowers; but that the real reason for their goings-on was that they were a hot-climate race compelled to live in a cold country, and that this had made them mad.

It was when I went back to Madame Hecquard's, some time later, to retrieve my walking stick which I had left there that evening, also a notebook full of memoranda about some phantoms in a book that doesn't get written very fast, that I specially remarked this October vacancy and air of attendance. It is a sober landscape: no flame colours as at home, just a gentle subsidence into pale brown and saffron. But the violets are still in flower, and roses, and big cider casks, stoppered with a twist of straw, creak along the way. Or on these clear nights, on the grass-topped cliffs over the sea, the world is so still that one thinks one might almost arrive at some conclusion and yet turns uneasily away from that lucid sky because of its exquisite lack of meaning. A candy-peel slice

of moon drifts down toward the rocks of Chausey, there is the heavy rattling crumble of high tide on the stony strip of upper beach, a mild air with strong grassy sweetness. How (one wonders) did we happen upon this one stretch of uplifted lonely pasture, spread superstitious above sea and bare to the night—just the field that one's mind required? Some day—and as an honorary member of the *Syndicat d'Initiative* of Donville-les-Bains I suppose I should relish the idea—some day people will build upon that field and even imagine they own it: but some of it will be mine, and I and my phantoms will walk there unawares.

Now I am beginning to approach the matter. The soft and ripened solemnities of autumn, the long serenity of lonely sands, these tickled by the jovial absurdities of bilingual ménage, all had long put me in dangerous disequilibrium. That afternoon, it appears, Julie had groaned more than usual. These groans—which are not the expression of any undue torsion of withers, but a combined whistle, sigh, grunt, pant, and hallelujah, accompanied by a roaring sneeze and a gargling of the glottis, are Julie's way of letting the household know that she is on the job. For, if by hazard as much as fifteen minutes have passed without Julie's having an opportunity to talk to someone, she begins to be doubtful of her own existence: she needs reassurance.

I asked the Urchin—who finds Julie a phenomenon as amazingly fascinating as a rainbow or a French locomotive—what Julie was groaning so much about. That's not groaning, he said, she's saying her prayers. I said that I did not think those emanations were exactly prayers, they seemed to me too vehement. Oh, yes, they are her prayers, he insisted; she always says something about Jesus after each one.

—You don't know nearly all the funny things that go on in this house, he said presently.

—I'm glad I don't, I said sternly; I know quite enough; it's difficult not to laugh as it is.

—Julie, I said, you had better repose yourself a few moments and take a glass of wine.

—Monsieur, she replied, there isn't any more red wine. (I began to see why the specially rich wave-length of the groans.)

—Eh, well, Julie, take some of the white.

—Monsieur, the white wine takes me with strange drollery in the stomach.

A little later Julie returned to the matter of the small enamel coffee-pot which I bought for five francs and on which her heart is set.

—It is only six days from now, Monsieur, that you will call for your good little coffee and there will be no Julie to bring it all hot.

—Julie, I reply, you are managing my weaknesses; I implore you not to agitate me.

—You will think then, Monsieur, in America, of that poor maiden who will be under the earth for all you know, the poor maiden to whom you gave this jolly small coffee-pot as a souvenir.

—But, Julie, if I give you that coffee-pot (the old rascal has had a carriage load of things given her already) what shall I have as a souvenir of *you*?

More groans in the kitchen, later. This is because Julie knows that to-night we are going over the proprietor's inventory, and the fact that she has broken eight out of the ten coffee-cups will presently be discussed.

She begs us not to put the new ones, just bought for replacement, "in circulation" before we go. "I have," she truly says, "a very maladroit hand with cups."

But it was at the dinner table that it happened.

—Julie, these sardines are very good. I've left some for you.

—Monsieur, I adore them. But I can't take any: they lie at the bottom of my stomach for three days.

I could see them lying there; but I got by this corner safely. Then, forgetting she was not in the kitchen, Julie let off another groan. The tiny *salle à manger* vibrated.

—Julie, you groan much this evening.

—Sir, it is my unhappy feet. I have no blemish

nowhere (she runs a patting hand over the superb roundures of her person) save in my feet. *Ils gonflent.*

It began to come. I couldn't help it. But she misunderstood my preliminary agitations.

Oui Monsieur, ils gonflent comme ça. And she seized the end of the bread-loaf to illustrate the size of those members when they *gonflent*.

It came. I laughed. I roared, I rocked, I cackled and wept and shook. The long restraint of months was broken, all Julie's adorable and maddening ways broke like surf on the pebbles of my mind, I caved in. I laughed . . . I laughed as a man laughs when he reads *L'Ile des Pingouins*. How long is it since I have laughed like that?—Not since the *Saturday Review* was founded.

CURE OF SOULS

I

“ SAXONIA ”

I SAT down one evening, in the smokeroom of the *Saxonia*, with a sandwich and a glass of toddy, to write in my diary. How pleasant it would be (I thought) to begin with the address 47° N, 36° W. But steamship smokerooms aren't what they were in the first chapter of *Captains Courageous*. (Did you ever wonder why the illustrator of that book drew a picture of an Atlantic liner steaming through a Grand Banks fog *with all her flags up*?) Just behind me a lady was talking about Henry James. In another corner a lady was winning a game of poker. On the thwartship settee more ladies, in shimmering gowns and long knee-crossed slopes of pale silk stocking, were listening partly to a garrulous gentleman who said he was writing a book about God and partly to another who was narrating how in Dayton, Ohio, the inscrutable brightness of Pelmanism shone round about him and strengthened him to put

over a big proposition upon a group of important customers. "A man will be what he wills to be," he concluded.

Born eavesdropper, I was not strong enough to occlude these agreeable distractions. Besides, I was merely jotting down, for my own pleasure, random attempts to define a work of art. "A work of art," I wrote, "is something composed in proportion; but which also reminds us of the uncomposable disproportion between the universe and the artist."—"A work of art" (I tried again) "is something which by the subtlety of its imperfection suggests the completeness we can never grasp." These absurdities, which gave me mild pleasure to consider, were probably the effect of reading Anatole France's delightful *Jardin d'Épiqueure*; for I am rational enough, in my proper senses, to know that a work of art needs no definition. If M. France had been in the smokeroom (I reflected) he would hardly have been idling over a solitary notebook and a hot Scotch. He would have been talking to the dark girl over there—the only one in the room whose voice was inaudible and stockings invisible. Or would he have been pondering the notice warning one against professional gamblers? How delightful an advertisement, I used to think: tantamount to warning us against the whole human race.

But the restless indolence of the sea was upon

me; even the bland, phosphorescent ironies of M. France were beginning to seem faintly sterile. I went to walk on deck: one of those long, vacant, hypnotic prowls that can only be taken, on ship-board, late at night. For during daytime there is a tacit agreement among passengers that no one must look at the sea. If you halt by the rail a moment to make friends with Space, someone is told off to Start a Conversation. Steamship companies, I believe, award promotion to their delightful pursers according to the number of social events—tennis tournaments, fancy-dress parties, dances, concerts—arranged to avert people's minds from that embarrassing reality, the Sea. The only time I actually saw a latitude crossing a longitude, in a star-shaped bubble of foam, I was called away to consider the problem of what ought to be done about taking up a collection for the orchestra. On the modern liner there is a deck for every amusement except thinking.

The beauty of the old *Saxonia* was that she isn't modern. How glad I was we had resisted a friend's temptation to come home in the *Berengaria*. The first moment we climbed into *Saxonia's* bowels, from the Cherbourg tender, wandering darkly through storerooms and holds and galleys and engine quarters until we reached the white cabin passages, I knew her for the honest old sweetheart she is, the kind of ship I used to cross in long ago,

CURE OF SOULS

the kind of ship I understand. When I took my bath, next morning, I immediately resumed my boyhood habit of putting my head under water, to hear the engines more plainly. Perhaps not even McAndrew knew that trick for tallying the magnificent throb of those great cranks. And *Saxonia's* engines are worth listening to and worth seeing: no turbine oil-burning business, but the real hell-raising, crashing rhythm of quadruple-expansion cylinders, and an old-fashioned stokehold next door—not manned by Gene O'Neill's symbolical apes, but by calm and apparently cheerful fellows.

The night I speak of, I strolled aft and looked in through the brass-circled ports of the lounge, where dancing was going on. The Chief had tossed care aside for the moment and was in his dress uniform, sidling about with sailorly gusto and ingeniously steering his partners against the swing of the ship. This was a brave sign; the night before, when she was dipping her nose into great green hills, kicking her bronze fins into thin water astern, the Chief's brow was dark. After years in turbines this was his first voyage in the old *Saxonia* and there was much to ponder. While you and I were topside, hanging on to something, enjoying the scream of the gale (that had passed through the regulation stages of *moderate*, *fresh*, *strong*, into *full*) and that thrilling fall and quavering shudder of a ship lifting her screws into mere

lather, the Chief was in dungarees paddling the bilges, watching the governor that automatically shuts down steam when she races, even crawling under boilers to see that they sat solid on their stools. For the Man Responsible takes few people's say-so in a new job. That was the kind of night when the upper deck of the big fast ships would have been unpleasant. But a solid old leisurely slows down to sixty-three revolutions, puts her snout creamily into it, and you don't even need the fiddles on the saloon tables.

Anything that is greatly loved, as an old ship is loved, deserves study and deserves open homage. There is a type of passenger who has been spoiled, by large cabins and running water and private baths, for the *Saxonia* sort of thing. But there are still some of us who like to know that we are aboard a ship, not a damned hotel; to whom the plain old companionways are a joy and every creak of see-saw corridors a deep music. As you lie in your narrow berth—"It's narrow, narrow make your bed and learn to lie your lane"—you study the honest pattern of bolts along the white girders overhead; you astonish to find how that cradling movement completes the whole meaning and sensation of life. So consoling, so lulling, such a perfection of curved restfulness, the creaking ease of a slow ship that takes her own time among big water seems to abolish the mind alto-

gether. "*C'est un grand débarras*," as M. France says.

The steamship companies, in their resolute desire to keep passengers amused, and the immense complexity of their business, have somewhat forgotten the essentially metaphysical nature of sea voyage. But the tradition lingers in an unexpected place—the purser's Routine Book. I am proud of having been allowed to study this great document from end to end: it lists everything that has to be done and thought of by the ship's business manager, and you will not wonder that pursers have to wear little rainbows of ribbon on their bosoms to keep up their courage. But the important thing is that in the Routine Book passengers are always referred to as "souls."

So, abandoning the irrelevancy of mind, it is as a soul you travel—in the eleven-day ships, at any rate. And you become aware of a greater soul too, that of the ship herself. Gazing entranced at the roaring flicker of her stout pistons, or privileged a moment to visit the bridge (not the glassed-in conservatory of the newer craft, but the old naked dog-trot, open from wing to wing), or palavering with the Lord of Below, you begin to realize how very dear to seafaring men themselves is this old vessel that has nearly run her course. Take her how you will, in the very shape

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and feel of her there is an honourable loveliness that the grander sort almost miss by their sheer splendour. For the greatest ships of to-day are so marvellous that neither man nor ocean can quite live up to them: but in the *Saxonia* type both sides of the problem meet and unite in gracious content. That is why I do not hesitate to honour her by name, for ships need praise as women do. They tell me that after her quarter century she will be withdrawn: that the ship-breakers are covetous of her stout mahogany and brass. But I keep thinking of Bill the Electrical Greaser, who has lived with her dynamos ever since she first went out, more than twenty-four years ago. Bill, who would certainly lose his way if he went topside (I don't suppose he ever saw her from above) has lived with her, as men live with women and ships, for twenty-four years. And when they take her off, what will Bill do then?

II

“CARONIA”

There must be some secret merit in the pure vacancy of a pellucid voyage like this; though one who loves to see a ship putting her nose into it may confess a private disappointment. This is now the eighth day of warm transparent weather and ball-room sea. The first night there was fog, and the

whistle hallooed steadily, that deep terrorizing groan rather like the voice of John Donne in a sermon. It is a fine romantic sound to hear—when nothing happens; though, after the Chief Officer's little afternoon lecture on boat-drill, you meditate, in your bunk (not yet knowing your state-room by heart) the exact order in which you would move toward your wife's life-preserver, your trousers, and the little folder of American Express checks. But after that one vigil there was nothing to reef the merriment of our delightful skipper. His enchanting mirth was often heard; our only gales were those of laughter proceeding from the captain's table in the saloon. The laughter of sea-captains is a comforting sound in the ears of passengers. Long may Captain Hossack and his fine *Caronia* make such comely crossings. I suppose it is a weakness of mine to believe that every ship I travel in is loveliest of all; yet I don't see how any could be more gracious to my eye than this steady old lady. A perfect vessel, nobly planned. From the boot-hole to the brass expansion-plate (I wonder how many passengers noticed that, the thwartship suture that gives and takes when she pitches) I find her full of delights; and her cranks are just as impressive as my vanished *Saxonia's*. There can be nothing against her except that she's faster than I knew: she turns off her 420 to 430 a day, even when three quarters

of an hour have been lifted from the clock. I was a little disturbed by a sign saying that if any Rotarians on board would make themselves known, the Purser would try to arrange the weekly sacramental lunch; but the notice disappeared, so evidently there weren't any. I believe that *Caronia* must be almost the very last of the Older generation (she was built about 1905) for the smokeroom steward tried gallantly to obey orders and enforce the placard *The Smokeroom Is Reserved for Gentlemen*: but he soon gave up. What an agreeable smokeroom it is, too, with plain old panelling like a Georgian taproom and a real open fireplace—not a bed of cold glass nuggets with an electric light under 'em.

I knew a sea-captain who said he kept himself in good trim by walking round the boat-deck (in the old days it used to be called the "hurricane-deck," but there aren't hurricanes now as there were for wet little ships like the *Umbria* and *Etruria*, or the blessed old *Pennlands* and *Wæslands* and *Westernlands* and *Belgenlands* that sailed from Philadelphia in the windy nineties)—by walking round the boat-deck picking up, without bending his knees, the hairpins dropped by young women late at night. But even that calisthenic is impossible now that all the young women are shingled to the nape. It is the junior officer who gets the exercise, playing deck tennis

with the clinker-built young women; it is my observation that the engineers play a more cunning game than the men from the bridge. I wonder why that is?

Except for such pleasing interims as meals, masquerade dances, deck tennis, or cards, the merely passenger mind retires into a hypnotized serenity. It is with gazing fed; it gapes patiently over the stainless gulf and finds it as full of possibility and yet as empty of reply as a vast blue ink-bottle. Here, on this warm broad teak-wood rail, is the very attitude and home of meditation . . . but no meditations come. The only consideration that hovers in my mind, after a week of scrutiny, is that perhaps the universe itself does not think, but even implores others not to do so. With a curious kind of alarm I found myself recoiling from Keyserling's *Travel Diary of a Philosopher* which a generous publisher sent me for shipboard reading. It is exactly the kind of book I love, and on shore I shall devour it; but here, impossible. Just as I always need a few glasses of wine to unlimber my French, so the mind requires a few whiffs of the unease of earth to liberate its fatal and enjoyable reasonings. Here no literature but the merciful detective story, or the latest *Lunatic at Large* can enter in.

My nearest approach to literature has been Mr. A. Edward Newton's *The Greatest Book in the*

World, which I enjoyed as I enjoy all Mr. Newton's chattings; and when, to my great surprise, I found him saying "If I were sending a boy to college, I would choose Haverford," you may imagine that I believed Mr. Newton's book to be a worthy volume. I think that is only the second time, in the general literature of the world, that I have found that small and unpublicited college mentioned. I was pleased. Speaking of Storer Clouston, a group of people were hot-Scotching in the smokeroom and more or less feeling their way into one another's tastes. Excellent progress was being made: there was a subtle suspicion that these were kinsprits. "Now," said one, "here is a very crucial question. Are you—I have a feeling that you are—Lunatic at Large kind of people?" Yes, a cunning question! For if they hadn't been they would merely have thought it an insult, and the matter would have ended. But with a scream of pleasure they cried "Indeed we are!" and all was well.

I think I must tell you of a great triumph, because it will never happen again. Smoking alone one evening I was accosted by a genial gentleman in the doll business. He told me a good deal about the increase in the American doll industry. "Did you know," I said, "that Great Britain has removed the tax on dolls' eyelashes?" This excited him enormously, as he had not known about it.

Well, I had read it in the latest issue of the *Manchester Guardian*, which reached me the morning I sailed. Nothing, after that, could dissuade him from believing that I too was a disguised magnum in the doll traffic. The information was evidently important to him, and cheered him vastly.

I don't agree with the Caliph Newton in all his delightfully crotchety musings; I think him worse than unfair to Matthew Arnold, for instance; but then you come upon so magnificent a thing as this—on Dickens—

“Of nature, in the ordinary acceptance of that word, he knew nothing, cared nothing. London was to him a vast field in which wild flowers grew, the children of the poor, and he gathered them by armfuls.”

When I found that I laid down the book with a tingle, climbed out of the steamer-chair, and went to the lonely northward deck to think it over. Has any one lately written a finer sentence?

Now, in an hour or so, we'll be sighting Land's End, and you know that prospective thrill after a week of space. No longer that slow and thoughtless feeling of mere existence, that one has in a clear calm midnight when the masthead is steady against the grainy sky. The channel is opening her arms to us, the queer uneasiness returns, a whole Continent full of irregular verbs is waiting. And this morning when I went on deck I dis-

tinctly smelt England. For seven days we had the universe almost to ourselves. But even God, I think, was restless on the eighth day.

III

“ TRANSYLVANIA ”

Taking a bath at the Central Hotel, Glasgow, I had a feeling of being already at sea. For in a Glasgow bathroom you find yourself among the specially large and sturdy plumbing, deep enormous tubs and brass taps, so familiar to all travellers in the Clyde-built ships. To read the name of *Shanks and Co., Barrhead*, written in a bathtub, has always been part of the flavour of sea-adventure; how often, simmering deep in hot slanting brine, I have hummed small private madrigals in honour of Messrs. Shanks.

It would take a number of pages justly to describe the various excitements of making one's first passage from Glasgow. The journey from Euston, eight happy hours in what must be one of the world's most comfortable trains, would be a theme by itself. It was odd that of all the named engines on the London Midland and Scottish line, I saw (in the yards at Crewe) the one that would give me the most surprise—an engine called *Charles Lamb*. The express that leaves Euston at 10 A. M. is timed (in October, anyhow) so that

you get your glimpse of the Westmorland hills in the full shine of afternoon. Be sure to look out for the two pretty girls sitting on a stone bridge near Grayrigg; you pass them about 3:15. Then, after the very Long-Islandish country north of Carlisle, where just casually your eye catches little stations called Gretna and Lockerbie, you meet the first sunset shadows in the folds of Annandale. You'll not be wasting time drinking tea in the restaurant car; it's my guess you'll be standing in the corridor watching those lovely bare ridges, bronze as Roman helmets in honeyed light; sifted with opal in the rough ravines. And if you're a lover of differentials in language, the first thing you'll mark at the Central Station in Glasgow is the sign *Passengers Are Requested to Shew Their Tickets*.

Certainly philologists should always make the Glasgow passage; words that are strange and yet anciently familiar are like toys for you to play with all the way over. "Bute Hall," said one, showing me the Glasgow University by starlight. "Lord Bute?" I asked. "Aye, he gifted it." Going down to Greenock, where we boarded *Transylvania*, how pleasant to see the sign *Ground to Feu*. Speaking of calling us in the morning, "I'll just give you a chap on the door at 8 o'clock," said the steward. And the Chief Engineer, in one of those midday cracks after the Captain has sent word

from the bridge that "the sun's over the foreyard," was telling of fishing for octopus. It's not bad meat if you don't know what it is, was the gist of his comment; "but if ye know, ye kind o' grue at it." There is some lively etymology to be taken in at every turn. Walking on the boat-deck, under the three black funnels, where that fine soupy whiff comes up the galley ventilator and sharpens the appetite, I found a small faucet marked *Boats' Breakers*. Why, one might well ponder, is a life-boat's water keg always called a *breaker*? The captain, who could outskeat many a college Ph. D. in his knowledge of words, told me why. It's really *barreca*, Spanish for a small cask. This pleased me, as I already knew the French *barrique*. There is no lingo so savoury as that of ships and charts. Even Cape Race, that ill-favoured coast which masters give a generous offering in foul weather, the Captain secretly relishes for being the tip of the Avalon Peninsula. Of the names on the Newfoundland chart I liked specially Random Sound: it seems to carry the indignant voice of perplexed old mariners. Pinchgut Tickle is another name I remember on that chart. It was Joseph Conrad, in a little essay called *Outside Literature*, who praised the kind of writing found in Notices to Mariners and other sea-memoranda of that sort, where a lack of precision in the text may mean life or death.

We were not less lucky than John Burroughs in our hap of weather. The Clyde, as he noted long ago in *Fresh Fields*, is the finest of all approaches to Britain; when we went down the firth on a transparent October afternoon it was at its best, reminding me of a grander Lake George. Glasgow has not been very skilful in letting the larger world know the magnificence of her noble waterway. We are all aware that she is a great shipbuilding city, but somehow we do not realize that she is approached by a winding strait among purple mountains that is surely among earth's finest picturesques. To an eye wonted to Long Island levels the fells and laws seem unexpectedly high and bluff. Goat Fell runs close upon 3000 feet; Ailsa Craig sheers up 1100 feet in one steep lump. As you glide so smoothly by the openings of a dozen lochs and sounds, each bending in among the unspoiled hills, or look over into the green apron of Ayrshire, it seems preposterous to leave this magic region barely glimpsed. I wonder if any other great manufacturing town has such fairy-lands at its door. By the time you have dropped the Mull of Kintyre, and Scotland fades, Rathlin Island (where the Bruce studied spiders) is in sight. It is too dark to see the Giant's Causeway, but even so to note near-by on the map such minstrel names as Coleraine and Limavady—yes, and Bushmills—gives a pensive pleasure. Off

Moville the tender comes down from Derry with Irish emigrants to board the ship, a fiddler playing reels to keep their hearts up. It's a longish trip from Derry in the tender, and I imagine there may well be sore hearts among them; though some who come to see them off have much drink taken and are in very lyric mood. But the eldritch voice of the ship's whistle, as she gives the tender a final salute, seems almost a refinement of cruelty. It is so very definite. But it is part of the "drill," as our Scottish friends term any manner of rite; and at sea that is all-important. At Moville I received an Irish telegram, in a bright green envelope. The official notations on the form were all in Irish, beginning *Telegrafa an Phuist*, which somehow brightly conveys a suggestion of swift urgency.

Then, for a week, you are drowned in vacancy. What British weather-reports always call an "anti-cyclone" (not, as anxious females sometimes imagine, a specially violent kind of cyclone; but a period of prevailing high barometer) was with us; day after day of fresh breezy blue. A caller air, as one Scot called it. And you move in the slow and yet regularly measured circle of ship-board hours, aware of Time only in the same vague accepting way that one is aware of the surrounding sea. Almost with incredulity you read, a week later, that "Heavy baggage must be ready to be

removed by 8 P. M." and they tell you that Nantucket Light Vessel will be "made" that afternoon. There were few passengers in the first cabin, and it seemed curiously like a house-party at some large country mansion. It would be true to say that the most exciting single event of the week (barring, of course, the little meetings when the Captain and the Chief talked unpublishably of the queer ways of the sea) was the night I had a vile cold. A kindly passenger gave me tablets of aspirin and phenacetin to take in the evening hot toddy. Later, as I lay gently tilting and steaming in my berth, I woke from marvellous dreams—dreams of half-apprehended glamour and magic; visions that drift away like smoke in moonlight but still leave behind them an uneasy suspicion of merriments and pangs beyond the humdrum of this daily plod. It was the kind of hypnotics most teasing of all: a dim continuation of something dreamed once before. I suppose that if it were not for the greatest peril of the sea (which is over-eating) one might have more of these lovely clairvoyances on board ship. If only the steamship companies didn't feed one so well and so often, if one had the austerity to live for a week on toast and bovril and hot toddy, what golden fables might result.

And to-morrow morning we shall sight Liberty again. There's nothing so wholesome as to hear the

little jokes people in other lands make about one's own country. A story now current on the other side is of a Frenchman making his first visit to America; and as he came up New York Bay an American pointed out the Statue of Liberty.

"Yes," said the Frenchman, "we do that too."

The American was puzzled. "Do what?"

"Put up statues to our dead."

THE FULL-GROWN POET

IT WAS perfectly delightful. I happened to be spending the afternoon with Q. U. when the literary editor came to interview him. I was a little troubled, because we had been talking rather unco matters, and the poet was in spate. He was in that characteristic vein where beauty and ribaldry are so strangely mixed: which must be kept dark at all costs so as not to disturb people. If he were to continue like that . . .

"How do you do?" said the critic (at least that's how *Who's Who* lists him)—"Oh, hullo, Morley, you here? Well, well."

I made a motion to withdraw, but Q. shook his head. "Bill just wants to ask some insulting questions," he said. "I'd feel safer with a witness."

That's one of the things I love about Q., he always has the right thing to say (even in his poems).

Bill went straight to the point.

"You remember that thing of Whitman's," he said. "About the Full-Grown Poet. Well, never mind; what I mean is, I want to write a piece

about you with that title; I feel that you are Full Grown, you've got stature; excuse my being so frank. One of the things I'd like to bring out in my piece is that people don't realize the extraordinary preliminary anguish of creation, how the damned thing is threaded out of your very bowels; the contemplations, postponements, futile gropings, horrors, that precede every work of art."

Q. replied by telling a bawdy story out of the book of Genesis, which was gruesomely apropos. I hoped Bill wouldn't allude to it in his article. Even in the Borzoi Classics (each copy numbered) a similar episode was omitted from the Confessions of old Jimjam Rousseau. But Bill's powers of omission are merely vestigial.

The interviewer swivelled his eyes a little wildly (I could see his quick retina netting a mental picture of Q.'s workroom to give local colour to his sketch). A taxi-driver, swerving a dangerous corner in thick traffic, sometimes shows just such a phobic glitter.

"Fine!" he exclaimed. "I see you agree with me. Now what I like about your stuff is that, in spite of these preliminary horrors, when it comes out it comes clean. Technically clean, I mean, of course. You know Gide, the great French critic—not nearly enough known over here—quotes some lines of Baudelaire which he says form the *motif*

for a great treatise on æsthetic. Order, beauty, luxury, calm, and voluptuousness: that is Baudelaire's sequence; and Gide says those are the elements of nourishment for any great work of art. Oh, gosh, Gide is great stuff: whole gangs of the young Frenchmen just stem right out of his *Nourritures Terrestres*."

"Out of his what?" inquired Q.

"His *Terrestrial Nourishments*, one of his early books, published in 1897. Think of it, he was only twenty-eight when that book was written. It's a pity our folks aren't wise to Gide."

"Surely he'd be a lot less useful to you if they were," Q. began mildly. . . .

"But just let me say this before I forget it," cried Bill. "I forget whether it's Gide's idea, or my own deduction from him, but the notion is (and I believe you feel it too) that man is now *too* sharply sensitized, too self-aware; Nature's great hankering for specific self-consciousness has, in man's case, passed the margin of decreasing returns (psychological returns, I mean) and he's canted toward destruction. You know, the Henry Adams dope."

Q.'s lips began that jolly curling pout that always precedes one of his best, but Bill was leaning forward with ardent face.

"There are some fellows getting up a scientific symposium on Sex," he continued. "Something

really detached, you know; genuine philosophical observation; there's always been too dam' much gross biology in the Sex business; well, they've got a lot of really unbiased testimony in this thing, getting it down to harmonic rhythms, graphed in orgasmic curves; nothing prettier than those curves if you really get some perspective on them. Well, they've gotten frank comments from all sorts of authors and scientists, really liberal-minded people who understand the love life."

"Yes," said Q. firmly, "I've seen the thing. They sent it to me for my opinion. I showed it to—well, to a woman I know."

"Ah?" said Bill. I knew by his manner that he felt he had struck pay-dirt for his article. "What did she think of it?"

"She said, 'Those children had better get off the merry-go-round, they'll break their necks.'"

Bill grinned in his disarming way, but was not torpedoed. "Well, I don't know," he said. "These things are rather fundamental you know. For instance, they've discovered that organic life can actually be created by alternate light and darkness striking into shallow salt water. What is that but a corroboration of the old myth that 'Dame Venus, love's lady, was born of the sea'? Anyhow it all comes back to Walt's doctrine: whatever tastes sweet to the most perfect person, that is finally right. Havelock Ellis approves that too.

... But of course even the parson can quote Walt to his purpose. That's the beauty of Walt. He played everlastingly safe because he caromed off every cushion there is."

There was a moment of silence while Bill lit a cigarette. Q. creaked uneasily in his chair. His remarks are usually oblique to the course of the topic.

"A terrible thing happened the other day," he said. "I had been reading a volume of very modern poems, some rather bully stuff too, but a bit eccentric in typography and so on. I happened to meet the author at a dinner, and complimented him heartily on his opening poem, which seemed to me a specially rich, frolicsome bit of incoherent outburst. To my distress he was obviously annoyed. When I got home I looked at the book again. What I had thought was his opening poem was really the table of contents. Really, it was quite fine."

"Another thing I want to bring out in my essay," said Bill, "is the dignity of your attitude. I don't mean your present posture, with your feet on the desk; but your attitude toward life, toward criticism. I like your bare and robust simplicity. So many poets are madly hastening about, busy lecturing and meeting fashionables, they positively don't have time to say what they think. Perhaps it's safer that way. But there's a sort of elemental

massiveness about you, like Nature herself, who is strangely silent when interviewed but has her own secret convictions."

"That's just my trouble, Bill," said Q. "I haven't any convictions. But I feel sure that if we chin a while you'll find some for me. Better stay to dinner."

"I'm awfully sorry, old man, but I must catch that next train. Got my page to make up to-night." He began rummaging in his brief-case. I had a horrid fear that he was going to produce Q.'s new book and ask him to autograph it.

"Thanks awfully for letting me come," he said. "I wanted to be sure I had the right slant on your ideas. If you want I can send you a proof, so you can be sure I quote you correctly. Here's a little thing I've brought you, my *Ejaculations, First Series*. I've put your name in it for you."

He patted Q.'s shoulder affectionately, shook hands with me, invited us both to lunch, and started off. Then he turned back at the gate, his face shining with genial excitement.

"There's another line of Whitman's," he said, "that I'd like to quote you as saying. It's this: 'Let him who is without my poems be assassinated!'"

"Go to it," laughed Q. We watched the caller striding swiftly down the hill toward the station.

"Well," I said, "that's the kind of interviewer

THE FULL-GROWN POET

who makes it easy for you. I love his way of making you stand sponsor for his own ideas. Nice cheerful fellow, anyhow."

"Cheerful?" said Q. "Is that your idea of cheerful? Poor heroic devil."

A COFFEE-BAR

AS YOU go up the Boul' Mich', toward the Luxembourg Gardens, just above the famous old Café de la Source (whose back door, opposite the Noctambules cabaret, always suggests the beginning of a story) you pass a little coffee-bar. Café-Bar de la Sorbonne it calls itself; and I close my eyes for a moment to see it plainly. Perhaps—indeed, very likely—it is a rainy evening and you slip in there for a café-cognac to think things over. At night it is a cave of various lights. The line of little red bulbs under the pavement-awning gives just a tender pink tinge to the air and to the piles of numbered saucers. Farther in is that magnificent terrace of bottles, some with green and blue foils on their necks. The ceiling is some sort of violent mosaic, the walls are mirrors, the cane chairs are striped orange and black. The waiters are coasting swiftly to and fro on the sliddery sawdusted floor, going from the bar to the larger room at the rear—2 *Billards Au Fond* says the sign—into which I never penetrated. The moist zinc counter sparkles with

reflections of glassy, twinkling colours. Even the buttered tartines shine with a greasy, pinkish light. Behind the bar is the man in shirtsleeves, with prominent, friendly, much-enduring eyes. How often I used to meditate as to the exact shade of temperament suggested by those eyes, which I found as difficult to put a word to as even Conrad and Ford Madox Ford (the author with the reversible name) found their fields of dark blue cabbages. They were eyes naturally friendly, but also with an under-light of weariness, or alarm, or passive suspicion; or a knowing calmness toward the stratagems of men. Eyes which, by always expressing a tinge of faint surprise, seemed to guard against the likelihood of ever being surprised further. So at any rate I used to think while I was standing at the bar drinking my coffee. *Au Comptoir, Café 30 c*, says the sign. Another subject of pondering was whether the errand boy from the near-by shoe shop had the faintest idea what the gilt letters on his cap could mean. He wore a braided uniform and the inscription on his cap was a perpetual indignation to me. Here, in the bosom of the Quarter on an actual *gradus ad Parnassum*, what legend did I find on that fellow's cap? PHITEESI, it said.

But it is not of the shoe-shop *chasseur* that I am really thinking. I am thinking of the girl, charmingly dressed in black, who used to come in every

morning at the same time to ask if there was a letter. Perhaps people are more indiscreet in their letters in France, and find it advisable to have them sent to café-bars instead of to their homes? Are they afraid that the wrong person will read them? They needn't worry about *me*, bless them; I find even the most innocent French script hard enough to decipher when duly addressed to me. But, anyhow, quite a lot of people have their letters sent to that café-bar. (Perhaps that is why the shirtsleeved proprietor shows that faint brightness of disillusion in his brown eyes.) And every morning the girl I speak of used to come in rapidly, go over to the corner of the bar where Shirtsleeves kept watch over his drawerful of small change, and ask if there was a letter. There was something delicately confidential in the way she asked: she did it more with her eyes than her voice. He would glance at the row of letters tucked into the foot of the mirror and gravely shake his head. Sometimes she was positive the letter was there, if he would only take it out from the row (politely arranged addresses inward so you couldn't spot the names). That third one from the left, it looked exactly (and I thought so, too) as though it were hers. But no.

She would console herself with a cup of black coffee, while I was sideways admiring the really charming trimness of her silhouette, seen against

the bright flow of the Boulevard outside. It seemed to me detestable that she never got that letter. I even thought of writing one to her myself, if I had known exactly how to direct it. It would have been fun to watch her reading it. But, of course, it would only have troubled her. After her coffee she always flitted off rapidly, down the street, on her way to work, I suppose. I am still wondering whether she ever got the letter; and if so, I hope it said what she wanted to hear. Her chin, against the coffee-cup, was lovely. It was all I could see, under the *cloche* hat; but it was a very Parisian chin, showing a hint of resolute *j'em'enfichisme*. So that even if the letter never came, I feel sure the chin still has its small bravado.

Another woman in Paris. I had first seen her twelve years before, when she took my breath away: for I had always been told how much one ought to admire her. And I did, in a kind of dumb fool's amazement. So I went back to see her again.

You see her at the end of a long murmuring corridor. A long way off you see her whiteness: down that aisle that is full of moving people and the rustle of feet and hushed voices. She stands against dark curtains which seem black but prove, on approach, deep red. Tremulously, expecting the old thrill, you come near, disregarding the others who stand on each side the way. You have disregarded everything else—the huge Roman

bathtubs (that would be so useful in some of the little Latin Quarter hotels) and the busts of Pallas. "That reminds me," said an American lady looking at one of these, "I want to go to Brentano's to see if the new *Ladies' Home Journal* has come in." And now you are in front of her—the Venus de Milo—and the old thrill doesn't vibrate.

The body—or as the American ladies say, the torso—is as noble as ever, but what has happened? It is heavy, muscular, sluggish. The face is void, drowsy, without meaning. How gladly you would sacrifice it to have the lost arms; which, perhaps, would bring her alive. You try to imagine what those great white arms could have been doing that would make her more a woman and less a goddess. Alas, she is just what a statue should never be—merely statuesque.

So I went away, wondering which one of us it was who had died in those twelve years. This, that we when young eagerly frequented, this that we were somehow taught to dream of as the ultimate perfection of classic form—well, how just that she seemed: how perfect and how formal and how stony. On any street corner I could see beauty that seemed more thrilling. But I was almost afraid to admit, even to myself, how disappointed I was. And then I was reading a recent issue of the *Transatlantic Review*. It is pleasant to admit that one always finds that magazine stimulating, because

Mr. Ford Madox Ford (the editor with the reversible name) says: "A man whose culture is insufficient to let him read the *Transatlantic* with pleasure is practically no better than a savage." And in that journal I found Havelock Ellis admitting the same thing about the Venus of Melos. She had died on him as she had died on me. I loved her no less, of course; but what I loved was not her majestic, heavy grace, but the memory of my own youthful zeal.

To have my secret unhappiness confirmed by Mr. Ellis was a joy such as confirmation always is. I felt the same way when, the other day, walking on a Brooklyn street, Walter de la Mare suddenly burst into praise of the mirthful magic of *The Wrong Box*; or when a Smith College girl asked me if there was in the world another book as amusing as Hamish Miles's *The Oxford Circus*. For it is confirmation that human beings most passionately seek. And if one knew why all merely æsthetic opinions grow, flower, and decay, one would know why it is that all the arts move gently along their destined loops and returning orbits. It would not be well to know, for we should all be less instant in our small concerns. It is well to feel sure of things while we may; and not remember that even the Ten Commandments are only approximations. . . . Recurring Decimals.

BETWEEN TWO CHAPTERS

BETWEEN two chapters of a task that completely absorbed him, a dream more real than any reality, a workman paused, and came (as they say) to life.

Every day (he said to himself) is an artistic whole: it comes out of nothing and goes back to nothing, like a perfect story. Even if empty, futile, or absurd, it is an orb ed transaction. It is (you can't escape the phrase) rounded by a sleep. What is that word they have for people who are blundering somewhere too close to facts? Yes, morbid.

Every day, could he control his impatience, offers the workman the analogies he needs. Loneliness, self-disgust, postponement, mirth. Though he added "mirth" as an afterthought: for he suddenly realized that there are days when you don't laugh. Of course, one can always laugh on a moment's notice; but he was thinking of the sudden whoops of unpremeditated cheer. Such mirth as Pan and Cupid utter, sitting on a stump, when they think of the solemn rotarians on Olympus.

These dejected them from the mountain-top because they were too mischievous for Heaven and kept spilling their ambrosia on the tablecloth. (Bibs had not been invented.) So, with no place in Heaven they had to suffer on earth as though they were men. They found it more fun; no wonder they laugh.

The workman saw it was difficult to keep his mind from going back to that crystalline abyss between the chapters. Yet he felt it wrong to go back at that moment: for the task was one in which reason, calculation, sense, could play little part. It had to be dreamed. Every man is sometimes interrupted in the course of his doings by a fit of brooding. But think of a task that is entirely brooding. He refreshed himself by adhering to that thought that every day offers the analogies one needs.

This workman had had, in one day, not less than six adventures. (1) A friendly parson had told him that another parson had told *him* "Every preacher should read *Typhoon*." This turned on a bulb in the workmān's mind: a whole chain of coloured bulbs, as on a Christmas tree. (If one goes out they all go dark.) Yes, indeed: every preacher ought to read *Typhoon*: he had never thought of it as a theological fable before. But it is, now, isn't it? (2) He was savage to a dog that had erred. This was a rambling dog of less than no

reputation who had, at a critical passage of the workman's reverie, interrupted him by a gross misbehaviour—which was not, perhaps, its "fault." (Imagine talking of a dog's "fault." I can hear Pan cackling on his stump.) He chastised the poor brute, thrust it out into a very cold night. Soon he was troubled and went on the porch to whistle. But there was no answer. This set him reading Meredith: he remembered the poem about thrashing a dog. It is not a well-known poem, for Meredith marred it by stilted lingo. He thrashed the English language as well as the dog. He was not so good, maybe, at the simpler moralizings. His extraordinary jargon required subtler themes for its felicity. Take *Lord Ormont and His Aminta*: magnificent passages, but how perilously close to Ouida is the general flavour.

(3) He saw a cat come up from the cellar and find unexpected scraps of fish in her plate. She flung herself upon them with a passion that revived his admiration of life. She crouched (her little propped elbows showing the lighter fur) purring and guzzling in ecstasy. He imagined how a tiger would look at a similar feast. (4) A child four years old, wearing only her shirt, was standing at a basin gravely washing her hands. He told her that a letter had come for her; that when she was ready for bed it would be read to her. She gave him brown eyes of solemn excite-

ment. "And then I can have it?" she said. (5) He was chopping a dead tree, by a frozen pond. The sharp ax shore clean patterny slants into the pink wood. "She must have some of the noble flavour of wood-cutting," he said, thinking of someone in the task he was working on. "I've dipped her too far in darkness." (6) He woke from a dream. I will tell you the dream.

There was a tropical sand beach; and for some unknown reason it was imperative that he and another man should swim, at once, to the town that could be seen a mile or so away across the water. The town was on cliffs that were lilac against sunset; a lighthouse winked jewel-pale in the honey-coloured light. Others were on the beach, hastening them on. They had run down to look for a rowboat, which wasn't there. They must swim. There was no inkling as to the nature of the danger, but there was instant necessity. They waded into the water, which was shallow so that they had to wade a long way, the other man a little ahead. The sandy bottom was heavy and sticky, the water in that ruddy light seemed thick and viscid. It was full of strange weeds, ferns, clinging sponges of vegetation; there was a feeling of crabs. At last the water was deep enough for swimming, but as they threw themselves forward for the struggle it seemed like liquid glue. They toiled and threshed in that warm slow element,

like flies in molten amber; the level sun gilded them with mocking light, the distant cliffs deepened to violet, night was onward. The other man drew slowly, slowly ahead. It was impossible, it couldn't be done, it ended.

Among the thousand haunting analogies of every day, how is the workman to choose those which will minister to his job? Well, that is his affair. Reasoning can help little. He ensues that "selected proportioned illusion of life" of which Walter de la Mare spoke in his lecture on *The Supernatural in Fiction*. He cannot compete with life itself in its fecundity. Just as psychic or physical shocks happening to the gravid woman will have their effect on the unborn child, so is it with a writer in travail.

It is a hard doctrine (said the workman, as he timidly returned toward that strange emptiness lying between the ink and the vision) but it seems as though every day is the microcosm. Every day, from toothpaste to toothpaste, is an artistic whole; it offers the fables we need if we have the courage to scan them. There, at the edge of his crystalline abyss he stands waiting the uncalculable bridge of dream: and the work itself must be rounded by a sleep. What was it Anatole France said? "No book is worth writing if you can completely understand it."

A MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES

THE Urchin and I were coming home from Baltimore with a suitcase full of old books, good old juvenile treasures such as *The Plant Hunters* (by Captain Mayne Reid, I hope I don't have to tell you) and *Voyage au Centre de la Terre* and *At the Back of the North Wind*; and even the tattered family copy of *Tom Holt's Log: A Tale of the Deep Sea*. I don't know who wrote it, for the binding and title-page are both gone; and I don't know whether I dare reread it, for it's sure to be a disappointment. But it contains Polly, the first girl in fiction I ever fell in love with.

Of course, quite a nice piece could be written about the sentimental pleasures of going along the shelves of vanished boyhood and bringing back, with an eight-year-old Urchin, some of the things that will now be his excitement. But while he was deep in *The Boy's Own Indoor Book* (Lippincott, 1890), seduced by the same fascinating chapter on "How to Make a Toy Locomotive" that used to delight me, I was getting out some

old schoolbooks from the suitcase. Here was the edition of Milton's "Minor" Poems that I had used—no, not so awfully long ago; in 1905, to be exact. I fell to reading the Notes, which fill 71 pages of small type. (The poems, only 56 pages of much larger.) Then, in the sweet retired solitude of the B. & O. smoker, Contemplation began to plume her feathers and let grow her wings.

I don't quite know how to admit you to the traffic of my somewhat painful meditatings except by quoting a few of the notes my startled eyes encountered. I had forgotten that schoolbooks are like that. It is astounding that any one ever grows up with a love for poetry. Was anything ever written more wholesomely to be enjoyed than *L'Allegro*? You remember the lines,

To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow . . .

Fairly translucent, aren't they? Mark you then what the fifteen-year-old finds in the Notes:

Then to come, etc. This passage is obscure. (1) It may mean that the lark is to come to *L'Allegro's* window and bid him "good-morrow." In this case

we must make *to come* and *bid* depend on *to hear* (41), and suppose that the unusual *to* before *come* is made necessary by the distance between it and the governing verb. But such a construction is awkward. The interpretation, moreover, forces us to make the phrase *in spite of sorrow* almost meaningless by applying it to the lark; it makes it difficult to account for L'Allegro seeing the performance of the cock described below (51-52); and, finally, obliges us to suppose Milton ignorant of the lark's habits, since the bird never approaches human habitations—an ignorance we are not justified in assuming if the passage can be explained in some other way. (2) Another interpretation makes *to come* and *bid* depend on *admit* (38). "Awakened by the lark, the poet, after listening to that early song, arises to give a blithe good-morrow at his window. Other matin sounds are heard, and he goes forth," etc. (Browne). Those who adopt this view explain that he bids "good-morrow" to "the rising morn," "the new day," or "the world in general." (3) Masson, however, thinks that L'Allegro is already out of doors. "Milton, or whoever the imaginary speaker is, asks Mirth to admit him to her company and that of the nymph Liberty, and to let him enjoy the pleasures natural to such companionship (38-40). He then goes on to specify such pleasures, or to give examples of them. The first (41-44) is that of the sensations of early morning, when, walking round a country cottage, one hears the song of the mounting skylark, welcoming the signs of sunrise. The second is that of coming to the cottage window, looking in, and bidding a cheerful good-morrow, through the sweet-brier, vine, or eglantine, to

those of the family who are also astir." This last interpretation is perhaps more in keeping with the good-hearted sociability of L'Allegro's character. But see Pattison, *Milton*, p. 23.

A little farther on we read in the poem that . . .

Every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.

Tells his tale. Counts the number of his sheep (Warton, on the suggestion of Headley). For *tell* meaning "count" and *tale* meaning "number," see *Psalm* xlviii, 12, *Exodus* v, 8, though it must be confessed that when *tell* and *tale* are combined, as in the present passage, "the almost invariable meaning is to narrate something" (Keightley). In view of this last fact, *tells his tale* is also interpreted as "relates his story"—*tale* being taken either in the general sense of "any story" or in the particular sense of "a love-tale." "But (1) this [particular sense] would be a somewhat abrupt use of the word *tale*. (2) The *every* shows that some piece of business is meant. (3) The context too shows that. (4) The early dawn is scarcely the time for love-making.

Signor Allegro mentions mountains. The Notes retort smartly "There are no mountains in the vicinity of Horton, where Milton probably wrote these poems." The poem refers to "towers and battlements"; Notes give us: "These," says Masson, "are almost evidently Windsor Castle." "With wanton heed and giddy cunning," writes Milton, having a gorgeous time (his pen spinning

merrily for the instant) but Notes pluck us back with "The figure is an oxymoron; consult a dictionary and explain."

Truly, like the drudging goblin, the editor's

*... shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-laborers could not end.*

Fortunately our friend Morning Face, at fifteen, pays little attention to the insinuating questions and cross-references of the editor. Nor do I wish to seem unkind. This sort of small-beer parsing has, I dare say, its usefulness. In the voice of genuine magistrates it may even be thrilling. But heavens! Do you intend children to read poetry as though it were a railway time-table?

In lines 317-18 of "Comus" Milton speaks (very prettily) of the "low-roosted lark" rousing from "her thatched pallet." I spare you the scholastic editor's explanation that "low-roosted lark" means "the lark in her low resting-place," and that "roost, even to-day, is used figuratively for any temporary resting-place." But on "thatched pallet" he is beyond price. Oyez:

Thatched, as Masson suggests, may here refer to the texture of the nest itself, and not to the covering. Keightley, however, says: "The ideas here belong rather to a henhouse than to the resting-place of the lark, which has no *thatch* over it, and in which, as it is on the ground, he does not *roost*."

I'm sorry: I can't go on quoting these nonsenses. If the pupil paid any genuine attention to them, which probably he doesn't, he'd get a queer kind of notion of how Milton wrote. He'd imagine that *Comus* was put together with the author's eyes on Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Shakespeare, and what not, picking out the plums. Of course, a thing like *Comus* is likely to pass like a swoon over the head of Fifteen anyhow; it is too full of the things that no gross ear can hear. Yet it would seem that an annotator might say less about the Earl of Bridgewater and more of the fact that the masque was written by a boy of twenty-five, which accounts for so much that is gloriously Bachelor-of-Artish in it. Instead of memoranda about "pleonasms" and "quadrissyllables" it would perhaps make the thing more human to the luckless pupil if he realized that the Lady was so obviously a phantom of a high-minded young celibate's imagination. How delightfully young-Miltonian she is: how differently he would have done her after his marriage to Miss Powell. And the simpering and gooseberry-headed Brothers. . . . But I'm not a teacher of literature, I have no right, probably, to expose my own ideas about such matters. After reading through the Notes on *Comus* in this very reputable edition (still used by thousands of children) I seemed to have been present at a murder. I could see the corpse of

Milton in the ditch, and the bloody Piemontese—or was it the Modern Language Association—marching in lock-step down the highway.

The disturbing part of it all is that it renews the unpleasant suspicion that the professional teachers of "English" do not always have any very clear idea of what literature is all about, or how it is created. Such pitiable haggling over absurd irrelevancies is, in Don Marquis's fine phrase, to play veterinary to the horse with wings. Poetry, God help us, is men's own hearts and lives; it is both a confession and a concealment. It rarely means exactly what it seems to. If we knew why Milton reached his most magnificent vibrations of eloquence when speaking for Comus and for Satan we might know why—in the good old Lexicographer's phrase—he suffered at Cambridge "the publick indignity of corporal correction."

Poetry happens when a mind bursts into a sudden blaze; and the annotators gather round, warming their hands at a discreet distance as they remark that such and such a glowing ember is an echo from Horace or Virgil, or a description of Windsor Castle. As though a poet like Milton, in his godlike fit, gives a damn where the mysterious suggestion arose. To margent loveliness with such trivial scribble is (let's adapt one of Comus's own lines) to live like Poetry's bastards, not her sons.

ESSAYS

How shall we justify the ways—not of God to man, but of teachers to literature? And you will hunt in vain in the textbooks for the most human tribute ever paid to Milton. It is this: the only time Wordsworth ever got drunk was when he visited Milton's old rooms at Cambridge.

A PACKAGE

THERE is a passage at the end of *Alice in Wonderland* that excellently describes how some farmyard sounds, recurring under the dream, gradually break through the mist of Alice's fancy and bring her two worlds into one.

Living in a dream at Donville in Normandy, there were three special sounds, endlessly repeated, that used to come chiming through the uneasy apprehensions of one who sat in a thatched cottage trying to write. The jingling bells of the baker's high-wheeled cart and other *fournisseurs* who sped merrily outside our stone wall. The sudden appalling outcry of donkeys, like the scream of a rusty pump-handle. And, behind all other voices, the solemn hoot of the narrow-gauge train on the Chemin de Fer de la Manche. Such a little railway, and it took itself with such charming seriousness.

Yes, I am thinking this morning of those serious little trains that go trundling northward from Granville, through Bréhal with its slender spire, and Chanteloup with its château, along the green trough of the Sienne; past Gavray and Hambye

(where is the ruined abbey) to Percy and Tessy. I can see the little engine, with two jacks on the bumper ready to hoist it back on the track if anything goes wrong. The engine has very tiny drive-wheels and a very tall smokestack; on the front of the boiler is a big handle that makes it look more than ever like a toy to be wound up. Then there come a couple of freight cars, and two wagons for passengers. There is a first-class compartment upholstered in red leather, but I never saw any one riding in it. Along the top of each car is a signboard that recommends *Benedictine* or *Amer Picon* or something else to drink. And you sit on the wooden seats and watch the butterflies scared up in clouds as you go puffing through the slanting Norman meadows at perhaps ten miles an hour. At Bréhal you wait fifteen or twenty minutes while they shunt on a truck of baled seaweed. At Ver (the right name for a fishing village) the anglers get in with their creels of catch.

I like the Chemin de Fer de la Manche for taking itself seriously. Even when it misses the connection at Cérences (where it crosses the full-sized railway) you won't get any humility out of the young conductor. With a horn to squawk, a whistle to blow, a big leather box full of tickets of different colours and ratings, all sorts of miscellaneous baggages to hoist on and off, and a big turnip watch to look at now and then, he is a

felicitous youth. I only wish he were a little more powerful, considering the weight of some of the dunnage he hefts. I have a horrid feeling that he is overstraining himself sometimes.

But now you are wondering why I am thinking of the Chemin de Fer de la Manche this morning, and why I can suddenly hear the dignified and continuous whistle of that little train. (It would go faster, I think, if the proud engineer didn't spend so much steam in whistling.) I will tell you why.

One of the pleasant perplexities in going abroad and then coming home again is connected with the matter of parcels. In spite of careful instructions, people will mail packages to your foreign address. They arrive after you have left, and then what happens?

There are several stations of the C. F. M. in Donville: in this way Donville and the railway, though both very small, keep up their self-esteem. There is Donville-Blancs Arbres, for instance, and Donville-Something else, and Donville-Triage. (Just what *Triage* means I never could quite find out.) These stations are all very minute, but they are carefully listed on the timetable. Donville-Triage was *our* station. And the other day I get a letter from the station-master at Donville-Triage. I am sure he remembers me; he will not have forgotten how, the first time I wanted to take a ride on the C. F. M., I went down to call on him the

evening before to present my compliments, apprise him of my intentions, and get all the dope. I wanted to know specially how to buy the right kind of ticket for riding in one of those open carriages. I must effectuate my traject in full air was what I told him. He was pleased at my enthusiasm and promised me everything. But then when the train came (it leaves Donville-Triage at 10:15, in case you should want to take it) they had left off the open carriages that day.

Well, it appears from the Chef de Gare's letter that someone, whose name he puts down as Fibert Saint Phila (my guess is that it's someone on Filbert Street, Philadelphia, but I have no notion who) has sent me a package, and the question is what shall be done about it. I believe, for the honour of the Chemin de Fer de la Manche, I will copy the letter in exact translation:

Station of DONVILLE-TRIAGE
27 December, 1924.

Dear Sir:

There is arrived in the Station addressed to you, dispatched by Mr. Fibert Saint Phila, merchandises as follows:

1 Postal Packet

which are at your disposition against the sum of

O Fr. 86 for carriage

O Fr. 25 for expense of notification

Total 1 Fr. 11.

A PACKAGE

I pray you to have these merchandises carried away immediately, warning you that at the expiration of the hereinunder-indicated delay they will be submitted to the legalities of storage determined by the tariff.

The person who will take delivery in the Station will have to be bearer of the present letter fortified by your signature at the bottom of the following notice.

If they were not lifted away from the Station in the 48 hours from the putting to post of the present letter of advice, they would be able to be trucked away from the office, and without other warning, into a public magazine, where they would remain at your disposition.

I have the honour to salute you.

THE CHIEF OF THE STATION.

My first thought on receiving this was to write to the friendly Chef de Gare saying that whatever may be in the parcel I will give it him as a present. But, with my usual slackness about letters, I didn't do so; besides, that might involve all sorts of legal correspondence, signing of international waivers and what not. I remember what trouble I got into when a friend of mine, touched by my wails about French pipe-fuel, sent me a package of tobacco from America. I was pursued all summer by mandamuses from Paris urging me to appear and explain why I was importing contraband. I think the best thing to do is allow the Donville-Triage station-master to believe me dead.

Besides, the parcel is probably only a book to autograph. Few people realize how much woe has been caused in this world by the two Eddies (Eddie Bok and Eddie Newton) who wrote books describing how they began when very young to collect autographs and never took No for an answer. There isn't a mail nowadays arriving in the home of any one who ever published a book that doesn't contain letters from Young Collectors. They even send you the wretched books, taking it for granted you'll sign them and wrap them up and send them back. And then, by-and-bye, they write and accuse you of theft.

But I like to think that the little train came puffing up the valley from Granville to Donville-Triage, along the Road of Iron of the Sleeve, carrying a package with my name on it.

The Chief of Station, looking over his records, must occasionally see that name and wonder what became of the strangely eloquent and ungrammatical alien. He will not realize, perhaps, that I wear a part of my heart in La Manche.

A BIRTHDAY LETTER

(FEBRUARY 10, 1925)

YOU understood about human weakness, so you will know how it is that I have left writing for your birthday until this last possible moment. I've been looking over some of your old letters. I don't do so often, it is too troublesome to see how some have misfeatured you. Then last night, about bread-and-cheese time—the *wishing* time of the evening you used to call it, when one rather hankers for some friend to drop in (to get between one's self and Eternity)—I began gaping stupidly into the fire, wondering how to light a candle for your cake. It was a different fire from yours: a fire of logs: wood that might have been made into desks. It was silly of me to sit brooding there, for to you of all men a letter should be the unstudied excess of the mind. But it was the distance between us, as snow was sifting, that chilled my fingers. You have said pleasant things about the difficulties of Distant Correspondence; but no letter was ever addressed you from so far as this. I sat there,

empty of everything but angry love. I could not write, so in your honour I had some hot water with its Better Adjunct, and went to bed.

What can I tell you that would interest you most? There are still Richardsons about (you remember him, the fellow who used to keep you waiting for your holidays? What an uneasy immortality he got himself thereby); and fellows like Rickman, of whom you said that he didn't have to be told a thing twice, are still rare birds. But it is as impossible to be bored on Murray Hill as it was on Fleet Street. Your old anxieties about abstaining from tobacco and liquor would be made more metaphysical here, since the abstinence is supposed to be compulsory. You'd be amused, if you knew how you are regarded as a gospel for the young, "studied" in schools, your desperate and special humour conned as a textbook of "whimsicality." Yes, they still label you "the gentle." They have forgotten your letters to S. T. C., imploring him to substitute drunken, shabby, unshaven, cross-eyed, stammering, or any other epithet that rang true in your ear. So endlessly has your "gentleness" been drummed into young ears that there has been, among our more savage juniors, a kind of odd blindness as to the real you. Perhaps they do not know you as you are in your letters. The rest of you, I must confess, it is long since I read. I am not a syste-

A BIRTHDAY LETTER

matic reader, I love to gather my notions of people from their casual ejaculations rather than where they open themselves deliberately. So it is in your letters that I have you and hold you. There you have taught us, more than a hundred novelists could do, what love means. It suffers long and is kind. There I see your trouble and weakness so much greater than many others' strength. There I see you laughing at solemn apes; I see your divine silliness and your rich shrewdness. Sometimes, when my self-pitying generation beats its breast, I think of your magnanimous patience. I think of your rockets of absurdity, sent up like sea signals on a dark sky of loneliness. I think of those last days when you and Mary said that the auction posters were your playbills. I think of your great love story—yours and Mary's—perhaps the bravest in the world. Then I wonder whether some of us nowadays should not write an *Apologia pro Vita Sua*—an Apology for living in a Sewer.

You could remember "few specialties in your life," you wrote once for someone (a publisher, perhaps?) who wanted a blurb about you. Except, you added, that you "once caught a swallow flying." Indeed you did: the wild fierce bird of laughter with wet eyes. I think that to have known you when you had been walking arm in arm with Barleycorn and cast no shadow on the

pavements of Covent Garden would have been very close to my idea of religion. I smile, as you did, to remember that the Woodbridge Book Club blackballed your volume. There was something in it—they did not know just what—that was not quite seemly. This implicates me, too, for some of my forbears, I suspect, may have cast a black pellet or so in that matter. I apologize: and neither of us loves them any the less for their genteel simplicity. And indeed that strange fancy of yours, when brightened into flame by understanding intercourse, must have been a lovely and reproachable sight.

We shall receive no letters in the grave, someone said: Dr. Johnson, perhaps. It is just as well, for you would scarcely relish this one. But it had to be written. If there are 150 candles on this cake of yours, they will be put there by the 150 who think of you not as the gentle, but as the tormented, desperate, mad, and tipsy Elia. Still, as you said of the *Ancient Mariner*, literature can sting us through sufferings into high pleasure. "I shall never like tripe again." Once you wrote "I never saw a hero; I wonder how they look." Ah, dear Charles, you need not have searched far. Mary could have told you.

THE MATERIAL TO THE ARTIST

I HAVE seen it coming on. Now it must be said. It is my dangerous privilege to tell you what I seem to have discerned.

Happiest, unhappiest of creatures! Do you know what you are? I will tell you. I will tell you, though I hate the word, misused by thousands of canting weathercocks. Yet among those who have taken out their passports for that foreign land the word is still valid. Poor soul, you are an artist.

You are an artist; an artist in the true sense; in the sense that thousands of men and women who never set hand to manuscript or canvas or clay, who work in offices and ride in daily elevators and tend babies in the suburbs, are also artists. You are an artist because you feel; yet mere feeling does not make you an artist. You are not an artist because you are unhappy, or because you are wilful, or because you are impatient with conventions and things that rhyme with long ago.

No, my dear; the artist, more than any other, values conventions at their high serene worth. Conventions—comings together—of the apt congruent mood, circumstance, intuition. And when he ruptures convention he does it consciously, meaningly, that the audience may be aware the convention exists. "I can do without God," one may have said to himself. But the mere so saying proves His existence. You are an artist because you feel—and control and modulate your feelings. "Waking life is a dream controlled," said Santayana.

You are an artist, my dear, because you are aware of the rich medium of pathos, absurdity, glamour, in which all human actions are set. You are an artist because you are aware. Aware of those little characteristic things, those strange revealing episodes, outcroppings of mirth, of horror, that typify the whole of life in miniature. You are a microscope. You are an artist in the sense that the cubist painter Nevinson is an artist, the poet de la Mare is an artist, the architect Gilbert is an artist, the paragrapher Adams is an artist. You see the world in a grain of sand. It is no credit to you. That queer besetting sense of values was born in you, somehow. A wind blew—a mandrake root yelped—a star slid—there it was. You found in your heart that mad conviction that the whole gigantic show of earth and behaviour

was set in motion for you alone. That the planet has laboured and created railway terminals and terraced buildings and beautiful women and toy balloons and subway cars full of dogged faces—for you, for your devoted amazement. For you, for this your moment of pitiful scrutiny, for this latest tremor of crumbling Now, the vast edifice of fairy tale swinked upward. Like the fiery bird of fable, you rise from red embers of poor burning selves and ecstasies forlorn. In this glory of you, you can afford to be humble. Lord help you, happiest, unhappiest of creatures.

And what have I to do with this? I am acting merely, for the instant, as the material for your art (don't misunderstand me). I am spokesman for the empty paper, proxy for the chunk of stone. I know that you will blunder; that you will see falsely; overboldly perhaps, overtimidly perhaps. I know you will be troubled. "A tadpole in a sea of flame," someone said. But your hunger will carry you through—your hunger for human contact, your passion for honest human value. This power, this power that is in you, will blunder; will warm you with shame in your lonely bed at night. But, knowing how your thoughts run, of one thing I am certain. You will never overdraw your account in the greatest security of all. You love life, and none of your checks on that commodity will come back cancelled *No Funds*. Let me give you,

for your private ledger, three mottoes. Here they are:

It is only the generous who give to the rich, the big who praise the big; the niggardly salve their consciences in doles to the humbly poor, making life into a pilgrimage of greedy patrons in search of grateful victims.

ELIZABETH BIBESCO.

The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath.

BACON.

I wear a high hat because it's a Charm against passion.

—From *Roger Bloomer*, by J. H. LAWSON.

This last—how superb it is—from that remarkable play by John Howard Lawson is, though ironically uttered, the perfect sentiment for the artist. He must have passion; but he must charm it; he must sing to it; he must soothe it to his needs, to the needs of other desperadoes.

Does that sound cowardly? Is it praise of the small sconced glim rather than of the blazing torch and cresset—that lights fools and wise men both the way to dusty death? I don't know; nor any man. Nor does it matter. The wind of your desire will move through you and speed you in your own channels. You will hardly even know how you have chosen. Being what you are, I know—aye, too well I know—that I (only a mouthpiece here

in behalf of your still blank foolscap) can teach you nothing of the meaning of the artist's desire. Yet (I speak as the voice of your unwritten dreams) the anxiety of the Material is no less real than the yearning of the Workman. I shall blow through you as the wind; pattern your darkness as the stars. And even that will not be enough. Oh, brave fabric of life, that waits to be possessed, moulded, held and shaped and kenned. You have had the heroics so far; now let me speak the lines. Can the Pen (which is you) tell the Paper (which am I) anything about wanting? Poems must be lived before they can be written, I heard you say. Aye, but who has more fully lived the wistful poem of not being fulfilled? It is I, not you, that shall be the mover. I shall wet your nib and I shall speed your hand. Passion, pride and fury, and pitiable humility, too—these are mine. Are they less noble than your small zeal of achievement? I shall be God; you the ritual. You shall never possess me. "Grave is her shape, and sweeter unpossessed." Yet . . . it was not she who said so.

To some such purpose, maybe, the fabric speaks to the fabricator. And now, returning to our original parts—beloved and lucky rascal, I repeat it: you are an artist. You are an artist because you see the shadows cast by the actors. Life, clumsy or malicious electrician, throws crosswise shafts upon his puppets; each is mimicked not only by one

shadow but by several. You are aware of these shadows, which so many do not see. Are you a *creative* artist? Is your trouble such that it forces you to communicate it? That I cannot tell. In any case, these strange, self-comforting, and self-harassing perceptions of ours must be our best consolation. They must be the shadow of the great rock in a weary land. Even so, a shadow is never more than a shadow.

My mind goes back again to that play, *Roger Bloomer*, which I have just read. A strange little play; very young in its rebellions; very old (as old as *Faust*, whatever the childlike critics may say) in its jolly and ingenious technique. There are some closing lines that struck me as nobly fine:

I've given you yourself, take it. . . . Face the music, falling about you like rain.

IN ITALICS

I SHALL make a botch of what I'm about to say, because I fear the vibration that is in my mind is not quite conveyable. But anyhow, the rain sopping on the little balcony outside my window, and the look-off over Manhattan's cliffs, and the card here beside me, all make the attempt irresistible.

I have just discovered Italy. I know that in the eyes of cultivated readers I am going to be ridiculous; but that doesn't matter. I'll be honest with you. Since a certain rainy day in the summer of 1912—a day when it rained just as it is raining now, and I sat in a hotel in Basel and decided it was too wet to bicycle over the Alps—I had said to myself (subconsciously, not aloud, where I could be overheard) that I could get along without Italy. I said to myself that there were already too many things in the world to be thought about, and that I'd have to sacrifice some of them. I had America to think about, and England, and Germany, and France; and then, later on, getting married and earning a living and raising a family; and

I fell in love with Manhattan, and (in a kind of shame-faced way) I said to myself that the new Cunard Building was probably a perfectly adequate substitute for Italy. . . .

And then to-day, coming into the office quite unsuspecting any staggering blow, there was that postcard on A. L.'s desk.

It's no use trying to describe that card to you, though I'll tell you enough so that you can identify it. Underneath the picture is written FIRENZE, Cappella Riccardi—Viaggio dei Magi—Un Cavaliere—Dettagli—Benozzo Gozzoli. The picture is of a young fellow in a white embroidered cloak, with a crown and long curly hair, riding on a white horse. He is accompanied by spearmen. In the background is a very consciously sculpturesque rocky hillside, a man galloping on horseback with lifted spear, and a couple of those very capersome greyhounds loved by Renaissance artists. These are pursuing the hindquarters of a flitting quadruped who has very nearly escaped, for his front half has got right off the postcard. If the man on horseback doesn't hurl his spear quickly the venison will get away. The white horse on which the protagonist is riding is (as they say in art catalogues) richly caparisoned; he is lifting his right front knee with the jolliest enthusiasm and pride; under his belly is visible another dog, of a quite mongrellish sort, who (this is only our guess) has

attached himself to the procession on his own hook and is enjoying himself greatly. The pricker of the rider's spur comes just over our mongrel's head and looks like a star honouring him.

Now this, I am painfully aware, gives no impression at all of the picture. And indeed, if the loveliness of the scene were transmissible in words, why should Benozzo Gozzoli have painted it? I only mention these details in order to enable connoisseurs of these matters to identify the thing and give them the pleasure of smiling at my simplicity. A. L., I learned, keeps this card on her desk to remind her that "beyond the Alps lies Italy." And I have borrowed it from her for a day or so until I can find some art dealer who can sell me a small photo of the thing.

For if this is what Italy means, I said to myself as I went through the curious adventures of a rainy day among those downtown cliffs—which included lunching with a pensive mandarin beside a window on the thirty-eighth floor and looking off at pyramids and pinnacles whorled in sifting mist and rain while we plotted a little innocent sorcery together—if this is what Italy means, it is high time that (in the charming phrase of our land) I "met up" with her. Of course it is true that I had once before, lunching aboard the steamship *Giulio Cesare* and tasting *asti spumante*, had a vague suspicion that Italy and I would get on well together.

But, remembering my disappointment on that wet day in Basel, I had always said sternly, No, I can get along without her. Well, a wet day divided us; now a wet day has brought us together again. Then (how divine is chance!) in came Hugh Western, the Chicago sonneteer. Hugh is a student of Italian art; I broached my naïf excitement to him and showed him the postal card. When he saw it, a flash—like a flicker of spiritual lightning—went over his serene, well-bred features. That was enough. Gozzoli, evidently, was an old friend of his. And if Gozzoli could kindle that look of understanding on the face of a Chicago sonneteer, then, by heaven, Gozzoli is the man for me. Look here, I said to A. L., I'm going to write a letter to this fellow Gozzoli. She didn't quite perceive, and began to explain that Gozzoli . . . Never mind, I said, I'm going to write him a letter. And one of these days I shall.

The youth, the glamour, the enchantment, the shining witness of life as it needs must be lived, emanate from that painting so strongly as to change and fortify the whole current of a man's day. That white horse with its gallant rider—one of the Medicis, A. L. told me—moved invisibly before me all day. I trod in his company. I was the yellow dog that joined the parade; there I was, under his horse's belly, but the star-point of his spur glistened over my humble head. And even

here in this cruel and magnificent city, I said to myself, life can yet be made noble and proud by art. A. L. begged me to get hold of some books and read up about the Medicis and Gozzoli; but I don't believe I want to. I prefer to imagine them, until I can lay eye upon the painting itself. A mural, she said. One of those things they paint on walls, I suppose, to prove that there are no walls.

I wish Benozzo Gozzoli could have seen the view I see now as I am typing this. The thousand golden panes of the Hudson Terminal, the Tel and Tel, and the lesser buildings between, shining through the dusk and wet; the dark little chapel and graveyard below; the winged statue dim against the heavy gray sky. Bless him, the man who did that horse's mild proud eye and curly nostril, the petulant, snobbish, and yet almost girlishly lovely face of young De Medici, Esq., the man who knew how to give those spears just the right angle of slant and the mongrel dog exactly his correct simper of idiotic fool satisfaction—that man would have known what to do about Downtown Manhattan at night. For what are we to do about it? How are we, in this burning and maddening civilization, to recapture that almost insolent glory of artistic fecundity? How shall we “like pelicans from sore-tweaked bosoms feather a nest for some great egg of song”?

That evening I broke the law.

EVERY TUESDAY

EVERY Tuesday," wrote John Donne in one of his weekly letters to his friend Goodyer, "I make account that I turn a great hour-glass, and consider that a week's life is run out since I writ. But I if aske my self what I have done in the last watch, or would do in the next, I can say nothing; if I say that I have passed it without hurting any, so may the Spider in my window."

And this came to me with a shock (it is the splendour of Donne that almost everything he wrote comes to you with a crash of recognition) because it was precisely my own case. For it is Tuesday evening that I had set aside in my budget of Time for writing the weekly *Bowling Green*. Though I never manage to get at it until Wednesday forenoon, just before the printer is expecting his copy. Tuesday evening, when one knows that the *Green* is debit, so becomes the most fertile of the week for something else. It becomes the best of Shroves.

The revival of interest in Donne, gathering under-current for several years, now is unques-

tionable. Two new books about him, this winter alone; and in "Elizabeth's" just-published novel, *Love*, I find one of her characters busy reading Donne and hankering to talk about him. In such brilliant poets as Elinor Wylie and John Crowe Ransom I seem to observe a voice that the Dean would have understood. It is plain that there is something in Donne that speaks to our present time.

I am an incapable porter of such explosive baggage as John Donne's writings. A little flash of him goes me a long way. Even books about him carry the same difficult voltage, so that I dip into them rather than ponder through. But in Hugh Fausset's *John Donne: A Study in Discord*, though I have not traversed it all, I found suggestions that led me toward private analogies valuable to myself. Mr. Fausset, in his lively excitement about Donne, wanders into some phrases that struck me as indiscreet (e.g., "the rhythm of sense plays a costive counterpoint upon the fluid rhythm of sound")—but a man can hardly dig deeply into Donne without becoming a bit arrant. The important thing is that Mr. Fausset does convey the sense that in Donne's pages "a great prince in prison lies." I always think of Donne, in his ecclesiastic robes, as Bagheera the black panther—beautiful in eloquence and latent ferocity; and carrying, under his dark fur, the bare callous of the

old chain—the king's palace at Oodeypore. A "baffled centaur" is Mr. Fausset's happy description of him at one angle of his life.

Mr. Fausset thrillingly enumerates Donne's P's and Q's—mostly P's, as his account is quartered into The Pagan, The Penitent, The Pensioner, The Preacher. Of the Pagan label (I must look up that word: didn't it mean, originally, only a suburbanite—a commuter?) I think Donne would have relished William James's reply: "Don't call me a pagan: it sounds too sectarian." For there was all Heaven and hell in him, and a heat that dissolves the gum on any paper *affiche*. Mr. Fausset gloriously quotes, as description of Donne's own way with a quill, his wildly humorous account of the literary style of the Holy Ghost:

The Holy Ghost is an eloquent Author, a vehement, and an abundant Author, but yet not luxuriant; he is far from a penurious, but as far from a superfluous style too.

Donne was a fountain filled with blood and ink. The only man who ever lived, perhaps, who could have written us an Old Testament measurably substitutional for the Jacobite, had that been lost. Give us a modern Donne and we will listen to these twentieth century versions of the Bible. No lesser maniac will serve.

There was something Spanish in him. Mr.

Fausset rather quaintly ascribes his sensuality to his Welsh blood; but this interest in Spain, from his childhood on, seems significant. Certainly there is something suggestive in the old legend—I don't know how old it may be; I invented it this minute—that Spain is the country where God lives. He lives there because He daren't turn His back on it; it is the weakest link in his chain of beads; there, if anywhere, He and the Demiurge will eventually "have it out." The most eloquent of our modern Satanophils have had a pinch of Iberia in them. At any rate Donne, like any sagacious Freudian, showed his passionate interest in Spain by going to war on her, in naval expeditions. That he was heartily seasick we know from his use of nauseous metaphor in later verse. But there was a Spain in his heart, and a Grand Inquisitor.

He is as modern, I think, as Sherwood Anderson; in fact, Mr. Anderson's washing-machine manufacturer—whom Mr. Anderson's fine imagination has long since transcended; for obvious reasons I do not say out-stripped—would have found much in common with Donne's frenzies. But even in his agonized third decade, Donne retained the redeeming buoyancy familiar to washing machines. He was the Ninety and Nine of the hymn, and also the Forty Four One Hundredths. He floated. It is about all we can say.

Perhaps one reason why Donne is so inscrutably

familiar, so couth and canny to our present generation of vipers, is that he did succeed in bruising the serpent with his heel. He learned, or almost we might say invented, the stunning truth that Man, the experimental artist, makes his greatest success when he plays over the head of his audience. Man's audience, of course, is Nature; and Nature, like any other audience, likes to feel that she is being given a Message; something that she (as they say at the ladies' clubs) "can take away with her." If you sing Mammy madrigals to her, she fills the house with automatic applause; but when you give her (as Donne did, from the pulpit of St. Paul's) the thrill of insane poetry, she listens in that uneasy awe and silence that is her best tribute to man.

I don't quite understand what Mr. Fausset means when he says that Donne "was neither a graceful nor a witty correspondent." To my taste his letters are the indivisible election of wit and grace. Mr. Charles E. Merrill edited some years ago the *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour*. In there, together with much more stately matter, you will find a little series of letters "To the worthiest Lady Mrs. Bridget White." They make me perfectly understand the Dean's skill with ladies. Apparently Mistress Bridget, who was only in her teens, was not very punctual in reply. After several unanswered sorties Donne writes:

MADAME,

I have but small comfort in this letter; the messenger comes too easily to me, and I am too sure that the letter shall be delivered. All adventures towards you should be of more difficulty and hazard. But perchance I need not lament this; it may be so many of my letters are lost already that it is time that one should come, like *Job's* servant, to bring word that the rest were lost. If you have had more before, this comes to aske how they were received; and if you have had none, it comes to try how they should have been received. It comes to you like a bashful servant, who, though he have an extreme desire to put himself in your presence, yet hath not much to say when he is come. . . . Your going away hath made *London* a dead carkasse. A Tearn and a Court do a little spice and embalme it, and keep it from putrefaction, but the soul went away in you: and I think the onley reason why the plague is somewhat slackned is because the place is dead already, and no body left worth the killing.

Your humblest and affectionatest servant
J. D.

Surely no woman could resist this. Nor could any God resist Donne's sermons.

STORMS AND CALMS

EVERY now and then there bobs up—not undiscouraged by the ingenious publishers—some argument as to the order in which the reader should “approach” Conrad’s works. In a recent symposium “20 Famous Critics Tell Readers How To Start Reading Joseph Conrad’s Books.” To a publisher all critics are famous, just as in the dark all cats are gray. But the interesting thing to me is to observe the majority by which these old salted Conrad shellbacks advise the apprentice to begin with what Conrad himself called his “storm pieces”—*Youth*, *Typhoon*, *The Nigger*. It reminds me that Shakespeare’s storm piece, *The Tempest*, is always put first in his collected editions. I wonder why?

I am not deposing any thesis; I am merely wondering. I suppose the most rational way of reading any man’s work, and the most arduous, is in the chronology of its writing; so can you trace the course of his mind. But only serious students are likely to do that; most readers are more haphazard. And I have an affectionate disrespect for those

who will allow their dealings with so fascinating an author as Conrad to be too much dictated by what critics suggest.

I wonder, though, whether Conrad did not have a very particular tenderness for what he has called his "calm pieces"; and whether, for many readers (who find hurricane and breaching seas genuine vertigo to soft head and stomach), *'Twixt Land and Sea* and *The Shadow Line* are not a more tactful beginning? Of course, it is easier to admire storm pieces than calms; perhaps also easier to write them (I am not asserting; only wondering; nothing great is easy to write, I have been told). But I am often faintly surprised that in talk about Conrad one hears so little of *The Shadow Line* and the three tales in *'Twixt Land and Sea*. In the case of a man like Conrad I think you have to watch him carefully for his most significant utterances; and when he says casually in the preface to *The Shadow Line*, "I admit this to be a fairly complex piece of work," perhaps he covertly means, "This is a devil of a big thing if you have the wit to discern it." At any rate, it *is* a devil of a big thing; and if one considers the time when it was written (the closing months of that gruesome year 1916) it takes place as one of the most heroic achievements in a not easy life. In that story there is a sudden picture of a seaman at the ship's wheel at night, his brown hands on the spokes lit up in the

darkness by the glow of the binnacle. I will not spoil your pleasure in the picture by insisting on the symbolism that Conrad intended; he explains it himself in the tale; and perhaps one of his weaknesses was that of too often explaining symbolism. But the bronze-shining hands on that shadowy wheel, the ship becalmed, the anxious question "Won't she answer the helm at all?"—these are matters for as careful meditation as the Chinese coolies battered to and fro in the hold of the *Nan-Shan*. When Conrad gave *The Shadow Line* its subtitle, "A Confession," when he hoisted on its halliards that quotation from Baudelaire, he was doing something that deserves watching.

It is foolish of me to write about Conrad; and certainly I should never try to prejudice readers in favour of trying one special book before another. There are several Conrads that I have never read myself; perhaps I never shall. Up to the present I have as much of him under hatches as I can properly stow. I have, I think, much the same feeling that he had when he came up New York harbour in the *Tuscania*. After a long and very careful study of that skyline he retreated to the port wing of Captain Bone's bridge and averted his eyes. He had had all he could carry.

But, since none of the present symposiarchs seem to have mentioned them, I can't help saying a word about the extraordinary stories in *'Twixt Land and*

Sea. "The Secret Sharer," is it a magnificent allegory of the horrors of man's duality? Of course, it doesn't matter whether you believe it is or not; like all great fables the suggestion is so implicit that as soon as you try to define it you destroy it. There indeed is the trouble to which all writers of fable are victim: when you ask them exactly what they mean, you murder them. If the "moral" of the thing can be explained, it is vanished. It can only be felt. Take the case of another story in the same book, "A Smile of Fortune." There is some colossal irony lurking in the thing; but after perhaps half a dozen readings in the past ten years, I would not venture to graph it. Is Jacobus, the thick-lipped ship chandler, offered to us as a veiled hero or as a scoundrel eager to traffic in the allure of his bastard daughter? And the girl herself, can you tell me any more wretchedly pitiable prisoner, yet how her terror and slattern beauty and potential vitality haunt us from those dead pages. What does it all simmer down to in the end? A deal in potatoes—the potatoes that Jacobus "paraded" (glorious word!) on the table. Any one who would ask what that story "means" is absurd. It means just what to-day means, and yesterday, and a week from next Thursday.

I imagine (I'm only wondering, not asserting) that perhaps the men best fitted to relish Conrad, the men who have known something of the life he

describes and are also brooders on the interwoven toe and heel of destiny, are most likely to turn to his "calm pieces" for that enveloping haze of significance which is his greatest gift. An extraordinary duplicity of meaning shimmers in those tales; the slightest movement becomes heavy ("fraught," the reviewers would say) with omen. It is in such stories that he recurs to his favourite theme of the great security of that old sea life as compared with the unrest and fever of the land. Happy, happy man who through the most difficult years of manhood could mature himself in that hard and mannerly calling—"that untempted life presenting no disquieting problems, invested with an elementary moral beauty by the absolute straightforwardness of its appeal and by the singleness of its purpose." Exempt from false sophistication and ethical jugglery, exempt from cultivated palaver, he was free to deepen himself in that beautiful naïveté which all great poets must have. He became, one thinks, almost as naïf as Keats or Shakespeare, with a heart as open to moral simplicities, to honest and ironic sentiment, to simple humours that could even make their mirth over a pair of whiskers. Then, like the secret sharer, he "lowered himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny."

So I am wondering. I am wondering whether

there isn't something in (for example) *The Shadow Line* that makes even *Typhoon* or *Youth*—yes, even *Heart of Darkness*—seem a trifle melodramatic? These great things, and heaven knows they *are* great, are so precisely what the literary critics *would* most admire. But somehow, hidden away between the lines, I feel more of the essential agony in *The Shadow Line* and *The Secret Sharer*. I haven't even mentioned "Freya," the third story in *'Twi'xt Land and Sea*—that desolately tragic tale that tells (if you choose to interpret it so) what happens to beautiful things when they run up against "authorities." These are all calm-water stories, laid in the luxurious Eastern sunshine that (Conrad suggests) has more psychic corruption than the fiercest northern gale. It is when becalmed that the sailor has time to think.

THE CREATIVE LIFE

AFTER reading *The Dance of Life** once, I thought: how agreeable to sit down and write copiously about it. After reading it twice, a more decent humility prevails. To "review" Mr. Ellis's fertile and fructuating book would be as impossible as to review life itself. For it speaks to those interior questionings and honesties where the happiest wisdom is silence. Yet, for an action to be comely (Mr. Ellis somewhere suggests) it need only be fitting to its particular relationships at its particular moment. The relation that has grown up between this book and myself is such that I would feel cowardly not to testify. And perhaps the man who has crowned his old age by this noble résumé of a life's thinkings would find no impropriety in a salute from a young ignoramus desperately but sincerely groping for those liberations of spirit that help to make life artful. It is by its echo in young and undisciplined hearts that Mr. Ellis's book will prove its virtue. To make life artful. . . . It is living itself con-

**The Dance of Life*, by Havelock Ellis.

sidered as an art that is the acorn of Mr. Ellis's foliage. Indeed, one has long suspected that the artists—using the word in no narrow sense—inkle truest happiness, for they have discarded (unconsciously, for the most part) the merely conventional and nonessential. Without the peace, the humility, the rigorous aversions, the charitable humours which we can learn from them, there is ill chance of our becoming more than mere botchers at this greatest of skills. Disobedience to the artistic instinct of the soul, its troubled but divinely judicious intuition of harmonies, is the most cruelly punished of human errors.

The dance of life! I have feared that to modern connotation Mr. Ellis's title may sound misleading: for the word *dance* has acquired slipshod and rowdy suggestions. The rhythms and measures he divines are more majestic and more obscure, more truly jocund yet also more tranquil, than those our mind is wont to image. One of the most beautiful things our time has invented is the slowed motion picture; just so we must conceive the pattern of the universe scanned on a scale that makes manifest its exquisite hesitation and pause. The recurring rondo of our joys and follies is a part of it, as much as the sprinkled movements of the sky. I was once one of a group of boys and girls that used to meet, in Oxford, to caper the old English country dances. In the rustic figures of

"Jenny Pluck Pears" and "Gathering Peascods" and "Up Tails All," in "Dargason" ("or, The New Sedany"), and "Three Meet" ("or, The Pleasures of the Town"), accompanied by those adorable gay and wheedling old musics, we youthfully frolicked in a merriment that was immortally harmless, hale, brimming with utter fun. In some unquestionable way one knew one's self attuned to the full meaning and melody of life. This was play—that is to say, art—at its most innocent best: I have never approached any happiness like it. When I remember the perfected charm and gusto of that jolly sport, whether indoors or on green lawns or damp riverside meadows, I realize what Mr. Ellis means when he suggests the primitive sensibility of the dance as the germ of all thought, all morals.

But all advances in thought, as Mr. Ellis summons many testimonies to prove, are assisted by fictions. And this book itself, so full of brave encouragement, is, I daresay, fictive enough. For though he urges us to believe that perhaps the art-instinct is the *primum mobile* of the spirit world (just as some one element may be fundamental in all matter), yet we know ourselves too well to be over-hopeful. Is there any sensitive person who has not found himself continually hampered and thwarted in his justest impulses, calloused by the friction of competing hopes, crazed by the tragedy

of needless and meaningless hastes and bickerings, thus tottering an errant course rather than proceeding with the clear sobriety of art? Civilization, though it often extorts our reluctant admiration, yet is also maddening. I have seen a New York taxi-driver, spinning his cab round a crowded corner, unconsciously roll his eyes with just the bewildered frenzy of a dog that isn't yet quite certain whether to bite or not. I have ridden in suburban electric trains where the continual crashing of metal doors, jarring of windows, jolting of starts and stops, racing of belated passengers to leap aboard at every station, all combined in a hullabaloo so shocking that unless one retired into a secret core of indifference one would surely go insane. Only too well we know our lives to be absurd and unwholesome; and we seek passionately, impossibly, to be made significant and whole.

These contradictions and paradoxes of life as we know it, Mr. Ellis patiently and generously considers. With the occasional sprinkle of bitterness that is palatable in philosophy; with the nicest simplicity of manner, and (more important still) with an eye cleansed by feasting on the wideness of Time and Space, he takes us through the four great arts that are most urgent to our condition: the art of Thinking, the art of Writing, the art of Religion, the art of Morals. Ever since I first encountered the book, I have wished there

were some way of making it compulsory study for parsons. For though it gives little consolation to churches, it has profound energy for those who esteem religion as the noblest form of æsthetic.

The fiery particle will not be put off with quibble or evasion. It is, it *is* important and needful that one should at least try to live life as an art, that it should be exempt from pitiable haggings and cowardly surrenders. And Ellis's special charm, perhaps, is that he keeps rediscovering to us those most precious of all secrets—our own thoughts, those we buried, forgot, or fled from in dismay. The notions we were a little leery of, that we folded neatly and hid under a stone while we went bathing in the clear swift stream of life, we here find again and recognize as the most important. His pages on the essential unity of science and art, for example. He insists that they are homoiousian (a word he does not use, but I do, for I love a good rollicking pedantry now and then). Those passages are the richest delight to any one who has been privileged to guess the imaginative poetical spirit that irradiates all genuine scientific inquiry. Everywhere he is on the side of the angels; and while he says very little that is novel or startling to any alert thinker, yet he says quite enough to galvanize many a merchant in intellectual hand-me-down and shoddy. And his substance is charmingly organized and thought out. The chapter on

literary art is truism to any intuitive lover of language; yet how admirably and winningly put. Always we find him taking the cudgel against stultifying rule and rigidity, the picayune pettifogging spirit that would construe the text of life as a proof-reader corrects galley slips. In the "Art of Morals," for instance, how eloquently he buttresses every artist's contention (sure to be misunderstood, of course) that to the philosopher there is no such thing as "morality," as vulgarly apprehended; for morality ceases to exist when it becomes conscious. Morality, of course, is merely what is mannerly and customary: and Mr. Ellis frankly would have us all as "immoral" as Jesus was.

What, then, if we try to lay penpoint upon it, is the cardinal bearing of this great book? I think it is this, that each of us (if capable of thought at all; and he excellently insists that not all are so capable) is an artist creating his own truth from the phenomena life gives him. The kingdom of Heaven is within us indeed, and each must be his own Buddha, his own Christ, his own Leonardo. This dark and pricklesome necessity surely does not imply any relaxing of our imperilled responsibility, rather an all the more stringent devotion to our little ember of artistic conscience. Out of these fantastic intractable materials that life has poured about us we must compose our picture as

best we may—like prisoners of war carving cunning toys of corn-cobs and peanut shells and chewing gum. Time—which is, I suppose, the canvas we paint on, the clay we knead—flows fast and faster—so fast, sometimes, we dimly suspect ourselves very close to the place it comes from. Every instant is an emergency, and we are apprenticed to the art of living before we know enough to have any choice. As so often on railroads, the brakeman doesn't call out the name of the stations until after the train has started. By the time we learn where we are going—it sounds very like Nothingness?—it is too late to cancel the ticket.

Any man who writes as plainly as Mr. Ellis of the real issues of life, is certain of a few sniffs and hoots. But he helps us toward the only task worth while, the only task that can bring us peace—the attempt to deal not as hucksters, but as poets, with the rough, blazing, infinitely precious fragments of life. He helps us to face the exquisite riddle with greater piety and courage, and to turn our necessity to glorious gain. Perhaps it is not inappropriate to say of his book, as he says of Lange's *History of Materialism* that so moved him years ago, "it can never be forgotten by any one who read it in youth."

A SEPARATION

I HAVEN'T seen her for four days. Not since she spent her first night (in a manner of speaking) away from home. . . . This, by the way, is for parents only. Others won't understand.

Babblings, as I call her when we are alone, is eight months old. As you know, about that age these minuscule creatures are likely to be turned over to the care of a nurse. Well now, *how* can I put it delicately? These outspoken medical fellows would simply say she had been weaned and leave it at that. The point is that the small creature sleeps in the nursery, and no longer in the bedroom with her parents. And so if you run for town early in the morning and don't get back at night until after dark, when will you see her? Not at all, until the week end.

I haven't seen her for four days: and walking home the other evening I realized what I had been missing. Why, her, the absurd microcosm. That little yammer, or (let's be honest) that sudden rousing squall, beginning in the middlenight as suddenly as a locomotive blows off steam; ending

with equal suddenness when a familiar form leaned over the crib; those queer rhythmical whimpers of cheer when, completely pleased, she was pushing herself down the psychic slopes of sleep; the excitement when she first rolled over, raised her head like a turtle, and gazed about with an air of triumph (until she learned that, also like the slug testudo, she couldn't get back) . . . these were what I lacked.

I *said* you wouldn't understand, didn't I?

But what I missed most of all were those private conferences we had, before breakfast, while I was getting dressed. The rest of the family being already at table, and cries coming aloft ("You'll miss your train"), what was I doing? Well, that was the time when I was calling her. . . I told you what I called her. We were alone. As I was tying my tie, she could watch me from the crib. I don't know just what she was laughing at. But anyhow, and since I'm not going to go into details, we had a few brief merriments together. We both understood them perfectly, each in our own way. She won't tell about them—no, not ever—because she won't remember them: and I am not one to let loose secrets shared with a lady, even the youngest. No, we'll respect an eternity of taciturnity. I'll have to confess, however, that there was just a little element of trickery on my part. Because, dressing finished, tie tied, hair brushed, all ready

to make a break for the cup of coffee and the train, I wasn't quite honest. I gave her a kinsprit grin, and said (this was pretty bad): "I'll be right back." I think she got the impression I was just going out of the room for a moment or so and would return to be entertained further. In that way I got off without distressing her. And then I never did come back, not till night time. It wasn't quite straight, maybe. I remember that her eyes followed me to the door.

This is bad; because I'm giving the impression that she liked me as much as I liked her. That's not so, of course. In a few seconds she had forgotten me entirely. She had far better company, all day long. The best company in the world, indeed. And of course I had plenty to think about, myself. But I didn't realize, until the bedroom was so painfully quiet, how much she meant. . . . And I haven't *seen* her for four days, not since she spent her first night away from home, in a manner of speaking.

THE UNWRITTEN BOOK

MANY critics have spoken—and many more will speak—of Doughty's *Arabia* as one of the world's great travel books. What they have said is true: though we doubt if that terrible, exhausting, and fiery work will ever be popular, though it may readily become fashionable.

But there is a book of travel (or travail) still to be written, dealing with a wilderness even more appalling than the Arabian desert, a book that might possibly be just as great as—or greater than—Doughty's. That is the book, unwritable perhaps, that would deal adequately, honestly, with the terrible, magnificent jungle of New York. Perhaps desert is a better word for it than jungle, for in a desert the sand leaves no trace of your passage. But I stick to the idea of a jungle, for it has strange and fantastic analogies. Through these vast thickets, trudging elate or despairing, each explorer beats out his own little paths of precarious safety. Lie covert near where the spiritual tracks cross one another—in a newspaper office, for ex-

ample, a bewildering ganglion of threaded human nerves and passions—and watch the inhabitants of the forest padding softly on their strange quests. For, like the wild animals, each has his own secret, instinctive way toward some Drinking Place. Or you may stand, if you prefer, dumbly contemplating the pitiful brightness of the steel plated subway stairs—brightness worn by millions of tragic, hopeful feet.

Like aisles of darkness under the dense tropic foliage are those subway tunnels, green and red lights brilliant as parakeets in the gloom. Bright as clumps of poisonous orchids are the little news-kennels with their coloured magazine covers. Poison, poison to the spirit, the thoughtful explorer may mutter to himself, and stoutly avert the eye. At every turning in the jungle, beside every thicket, or under the huge spreading palm-tree girders of the Pennsylvania trainshed, he may imagine he hears the sudden soft whir of Time's savage arrow, feathered so prettily, flicked into the body of some fellow traveller. The shrill call of the traffic cop's whistle, is it not dreadfully like the cry of some threatening parrot or macaw, perched ironically above the throng? That cry halts even the great pachyderms and the chattering monkeys, all on their way to some Drinking Place of their own. Like a huge yellow python you can see the L train winding among the tall bamboo

groves of buildings. And you must struggle with everyone, even with your own indolent soul, for command of your spirit in that monstrous jungle.

The analogies are terrible indeed! In that frenzy of haste and friendliness, where the traveller must even struggle against his well-loved comrades for the endangered command of his own soul; where silly half-truths are so fashionable and so well rewarded that even the desire to write honourable candour easily grows dim; where sometimes one almost attains the ultimate and most fearful disillusion—that God Himself is in a hurry; in that jungle be wary and be calm, my soul. The whole jungle conspires and rustles with menace; it is thick with beauty and terror; how swiftly the creepers wind you in if you try to pause for reason and peace. Strange enemies, in the loveliest of sleep stripings, lie on the branching limbs overhead, waiting to spring; crouch in the long grass, eager to strike. In that jungle men cannot even worship God without quarrelling about it. The strangest laughs are heard, sounding through the stillness; the lapping of the thirsty creatures is anxiously suspended as they raise their heads and listen to the queer voices of the night.

Magnificent, thrilling, inexplicable wilderness! Chop through it your own little paths, endangered soul; find your own strange hidden waters of refreshment. And pay no heed to any wisdom save

your own. There are the quaintest flutings and voices of decoy. The owl has a beguiling murmur; the adder a shining skin. Be childish in your sullen wisdom, O wandering spirit! It is of this wilderness that some day a book might be written. Yet perhaps it has been written already—the greatest book of our time, maybe, if your mind runs that way. You can always tell when a book is really great—it does become a classic for children? For men, terribly fearing the sharp wisdom of fables, always soften them by pretending they were written for children. It happened to Swift, for instance. And the greatest book of our time, perhaps, is *The Jungle Book*.

Magnificent, terrible jungle of New York! Like Mowgli, you must learn to run with the wolves, and learn to love them, for they are lovable and brave. But be wary, O soul; for there will come a time when you must return to live with men.

IN AUGUST

WHAT is it that happens to the mind in August? It *æstivates*. In this imperial and drowsy month it retires into a warm, beaming inefficiency. It secludes in the secret splendour of its loneliness. With gently ironic amusement it watches the lively body which now pleasures in swimming, in digging, in all glistening amusement under the heavy sun. Burdened with dreams, the mind has no word. Something in it is dead, visited only by the buzz-flies of fancy, with their green and purple wings.

The sultry ripeness of the earth is too plain a parable. Noon brims over with golden insult, a foam of sunny anger washes the garden beds. Seeds of anger sprinkle in the fertile, speechless heart, seeds for winter flowers. The August mind is too stupid (or, if you will, too wise) to think in words. It receives only feelings. In the thick emptiness of night, dry insects chatter some monstrous creed. Dogs, the determined custodians of human morals, yell sudden indignation through the woods. Dogs are born journalists; their voices are like extras of dismay.

Be patient with the slack mind of August: it is a noble time. Under the powdered ash and rubbish, the spark still bites the knot. Deep in the parallel forest, fancy, the sunburnt *carbonaro*, tends his sullen fire.

To medicine the grossness of August one turns to savagery of physical effort. Cutting down trees, spading roots, cleaning and burning brush in the little tangled lot behind the garage, is rhubarb and soda to the spirit. Having spaded and raked and smoothed, let in the fierce carbohic sun and laid out a small gravel path as *Philosophenweg* (to straighten and restrict the ambling pace of fancy), it struck the labourer that one thing was lacking. The Buddhist, when strangeness is abroad, pastes up his shrine with clean paper to keep the ghosts of his ancestry from offense. But some others (wiser, I think), believe that the only way to placate weird spirits is to invite them in and make them at home. Seeing the little emptiness under the tent of grapevine, the gardener knew then what was needed. A bust of Pan.

A dozen years ago, outside that old stoneyard on Thirty-second Street (the Pennsylvania Hotel was built over it afterward), there was a stone head of Pan on a tall pedestal. It stood in the doorway, grinning queer mischief and frustration. Many commuters, who used to hasten by, must remember the gay and satiric face, the wreath of

grape leaves, the small sprouting horns. When the hotel was built, Pan disappeared. There is one something like him in front of a chophouse on Forty-fourth Street. Some day, perhaps, I shall find Himself. Then we shall dedicate his grape arbour to him—perhaps by reading one of Tom Dekker's prayers in *Four Birds of Noah's Arke*, which Appleton has republished. "That a dramatist of the Elizabethan age," says the Appleton announcement, "not noted himself either for piety or virtue, should succeed in writing prayers so moving and genuine is an interesting problem of genius." Oh blessed naïveté of blurb-writers! When were any genuine prayers ever written save by men with some seed of anguish in their hearts?

But there are shrines greater than mine still waiting for a god. The other day the telephone rang; and in consequence I found myself, soon afterward, in an enchanted place. In the gardens of a François Premier château, on a Long Island hilltop, is a little open-air theatre. Approaching it down long alleys of formal foliage, past rosaries and sun-dials and an acre of fountain pools, with a gradually increasing sense of something important to be seen, you reach the low grassy terraces, empty in the dusk. At the end of the space is a little French *temple d'amour*, graceful stone pillars surmounted by an open dome of dainty iron filigree. Retrieved entire from some misfortuned

French pleasance, there it stands; but the little Venus or Cupid that should laugh within is absent. What a strange feeling of lack that absence gave. Stretching outward on either hand were the fragrant cedar aisles that imagination thronged with bright nymphs and twilight music to do honour to the god. It was a whiff of eighteenth century France, miraculously captivated leagues and lifetimes from home; and if the necessary image were there—one cry of passion among the ceremonies green—old French deities would not hesitate to send their ambassadors. And what a pretty fancy, in the design of those little absurd temples: the open roof, so that even the naked goddess of fable must abide the fortunes of the weather. Perhaps there was also a savoury pellet of wisdom for the mind to chew: after all these lovely artifices of landscape, these parterres and hedges and perfections of floral art—the little shrine was bare. An analogy, was it, intended by the wise seigneur? Does he mean that Beauty will never wholly reveal herself of her own accord, that what we imagine on the altar is more compelling than anything the sculptor could put?

THE OUTSIDE EDGE

THERE is a little pond in a Long Island glade; a pond that will never be again quite what it was when Mr. Gissing used to go sailing on it and thought it was the ocean, for now houses are building near. But it is a pond that has done a good deal of thinking, and there seem to be in it not merely tadpoles but other slipperies just as interesting as tadpoles, shoals of small analogies and parables. There is a big willow tree that sprawls prostrate over one end of the pool and has all the appearance of being dead and naked; yet always in the juicy season it has many green things to say for itself.

Just now the pond is a smooth shield of ice, and while children scuttle about on bendy ankles and accumulate small shocks at the snub end of their spines (this makes them grow, you tell them) you may choose a clear alcove and practise the new skates. One who has, ever since boyhood, used only hockey skates, and now abandons them for a pair of the more fanciful sort (with curly Dutch ends) finds he has to learn all over again. Hockey

skates are worthless except for straightaway speeding and sliding; and how pleasant it is to find that on those new curved runners one can, no matter how clumsily, swing to and fro in arcs and spirals. But, as I say, it requires learning anew; it requires a fresh notion and theory of the business of skating; a quite different balance and purpose. But learning all over again is the life job of the artist, and he who never attempts it is damned.

It is an extraordinary excitement, even for the duffer who has never done more than coast about on hockey skates, to learn that on the new runners he can lean over on the outside edge and find himself miraculously carried round on one foot in a happy spiral. The cunning steel, once you have learned to confide upon it, does not slither but cuts clean and true; the children are too occupied in their own equilibrations to make merry over your tentative antics, your experiments with the spare leg. It requires recklessness to catch just the proper lean and poise: the gesture is obviously impossible, and yet, now and then, it succeeds. You get discouraged, of course; you go home presently on flat weary feet, and think it over. In literature and in art and in everything else, I suppose, it isn't until you get off the flat-runnered hockey skates and lean over on insupportable nothing that you begin to feel the authentic ecstasy and pang. The

people, for instance, who squabble about whether the Ten Commandments should be taught in schools, have never taken off their hockey skates. Was there ever a more delicious episode than that of the lady who objected to the inculcation of Thou Shalt Not Kill among the urchins of New York City? It is pacifist propaganda, she said. She will never say truer word. And the reason is obvious why bishops and statesmen and trustees and editors and managing people of all sorts wear glittering hockey skates. They have to speed with extreme rapidity over very thin ice. They earn their living by keeping people contented and as far as possible preventing awkward questions. But the artist, who lives (at any rate part of the time) by agitating people with unbearable doubts and intolerable intimations of glory, cannot be satisfied with those long straightforward strokes. He must choose some clear corner and practise his perilous grapevine pattern. It is for him as it was for Marlow in *Lord Jim*—

It seemed to me I was being made to comprehend the Inconceivable—and I know of nothing to compare with the discomfort of such a sensation. I was made to look at the convention that lurks in all truth and on the essential sincerity of falsehood. He appealed to all sides at once,—to the side turned perpetually to the light of day, and to that side of us which, like the other hemisphere of the moon, exists stealthily in perpetual dark-

ness, with only a fearful ashy light falling at times on the edge . . . as if the obscure truth involved were momentous enough to affect mankind's conception of itself.

There, you see, is Conrad leaning over pretty far on the outside edge. There are no hockey skates on *his* feet when he's telling a story. I know people who have read, several times, the first hundred or so pages of *Lord Jim* and have never got any farther because they found, having minds active for analogy, as much to think about as they could carry. The book, you see, like almost every other exciting book, runs into theology; and Lord Jim himself is an interesting symbol of almost everyone who (with the most honourable motives, obviously) hastens to embark in his lifeboat of some creed or set of Commandments and leave the shipload of pilgrims to its own fate. Even the French gunboat that eventually rescued the *Patna*, you remember, had two quartermasters ready with axes to cut the towing-hawser in case she began to go down. . . . It is the readiness of theologians to be first into the lifeboats, the intellectual lifeboats of course, that causes so many nowadays to cry, "What can I do *not* to be saved?" Rightly does Marlow say, in that thoroughly dreadful book, "It was solemn, and a little ridiculous too, as they always are, those struggles of an individual trying to save from the fire his idea of what his

moral identity should be, this precious notion of a convention, only one of the rules of the game, nothing more, but all the same so terribly effective by its assumption of unlimited power over natural instincts, by the awful penalty of its failure."

When the artist leans surely enough on the outside edge, the steel cuts its ringing and perfect curve. It may not be easy for us to say precisely what he "means." For instance, it is exhilarating to find the dramatic critics somewhat incoherent in their comments on Franz Werfel's amazing *Goat Song*, which the always audacious Theatre Guild has produced. I have not seen the play but I've read it and find it thrilling. What does it "mean"? But what does *Hamlet* mean? I don't know that any one ever attempted a *précis*, and it never occurred to me before even to wonder. For when an artist is skating like that, leaning far over on the intangible, the reader's secret comprehensions and anxious intuitions rise up to meet and support him, just as the shifting slopes and poises of balance keep the steel runner curving on its graving arc. When the young student in *Goat Song*, suggested to be a son of Pan, says, "Perhaps I've only had one joy in all my life, the time I saw a forest burn," it may sound senseless, but the poet knows instantly what he intends. So, throughout that strange orgiastic play, Werfel speaks to something which is deeper than any of man's catch-

words. When critics tell you that they don't know what a thing means, sometimes it is because they know perfectly well but don't believe it mannerly to tell. And that, I repeat, is what poets are for: to frighten us, literally, out of our everyday wits; to make us look at the dog on the hearthrug and wonder if he is wiser than we.

Nor is the poet, when he skates on the outside edge, always terrifying or cruel. It may be such winsome and adorable stuff as Elizabeth Mackinstry has given us in *Puck in Pasture*, a collection of goblin poems written and illustrated by one who has the true pixie spirit. It is an ideal book to brood upon some snowy evening when the fire burns low, when the naked trees show their dark crisscross against the dull moon-hazed sky, when the mouse fleets back to the pot-cupboard and the dog sighs on the rug. At such moments solitude seems no longer shameful; your own uneasiness as you prowls restlessly about proves that the elfin world is near. If you sleep it will be to dream fearfully, perhaps; and to startle happily back into the customary world and learn how comfortable (after all!) it is. You have been skating on the Outside Edge.

EXITS

THERE is a building, on a famous corner of the Great White Way, that always seemed to me ideal for any kind of business that might need occasional alacrity and subterfuge. It has its exits and its entrances, lots of them. I have never carefully mapped the possibilities of its lobby, but it has a delightfully queer flavour. There are, I think, three doors upon three different streets; there are two ranks of elevators, there are stairways up to clothing merchants and down to beauty parlours and subways. There are telephone booths, admirably placed for secrecy; there is a theatre ticket agency. There is a soda fountain and a hat-and-shoe cleaning store. And you enter, from Broadway, between a display of imported canes and shirtings on the right, and a row of blithe ladies' bonnets on the left; so that be you he or she you pass inward with an ambitious humour.

So there is this building, and if you go into the lobby and catch the feel of it you will perceive how curious a blend it is of Broadway and of Forty-Second Street. Yes, it is queer. There are some offices in that building for which I have great

respect; there is a lecture bureau which has been visited by some of the most elegant and intellectual English poets; that lecture manager, excellent fellow, once hired me to go to Chicago and talk to a club of ladies; an enchanting adventure. But that was not my first romantic connection with that building.

When I was still very young and drank life straight from the neck of the bottle—seven years ago, to be exact—I used to visit that building often, rejoicing in its volatile emanation of Broadway. A theatrical producer, a gorgeously lovable and improbable person, was putting on a show that another man and I had written. I'm afraid it wasn't a very intellectual play, and it became even less so in the hands of that cheerful producer; but the other author and I maintained (as we do still) that in its innocent hilarity it leaped up toward the farce voltage of *Charley's Aunt*. Both the authors were then in the heyday of young humours—reckless as two Elizabethans in a Southwark tavern. One had already escaped from newspaper toil and the other imagined he was about to. I suppose we were in the same vein of naïf self-esteem that Mr. Bok has shown since he shuffled off the coil of the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Fortune, such fortune as befalls authors of Abie's Irish Roses, was within our grasp, or, at any rate, within the producer's grasp; so we asserted as we lay

awake in small-town hotels while the play was trying-out upstate. In that happy land she trouped to conquer. Those were great nights; no one can know their equal until he has been concerned in a play where Broadway reverses the judgment of *The Road*.

All that is too long and too jovial a story to be entered upon here. I am talking about that building, where I used to visit the producer's office and gaze with thrilled amazement upon all sorts of phenomena that were quite of another world. Even the producer's private sanctum, as I remember it, had a secret exit, through a small kennel where a young man asserted to be a press agent sat among masses of carbon paper and flimsy. I wish I could remember the producer's telephone girl more clearly; she sat at a very tiny box of electric wires and plugs, she was beautiful and dark, and skilful at knowing who, of the many callers, could be admitted inside the wooden gate that latched with a click. Somewhere in the world of the Rialto that lady must be still in existence, with much less hair and much more experience than then, but still, I'll warrant, unembittered and unamazed. I remember her telling me that *Roly Boly Eyes* was her idea of a corking show. "It's playing at the Knickerbocker," she said; "you better go'n see it, it'll give you some ideas."

I suppose it may have been passing by Bryant

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Hall, on Sixth Avenue, the other day, that reminded me of these matters; because our show rehearsed there once or twice (we rehearsed in all sorts of places, shifted around from one rendezvous to another; one that I remember with pleasure was the ladies' lounge of the Knickerbocker Theatre, one was a dance hall on Tenth Avenue, one the dining room of a hotel in Poughkeepsie). And I thought to myself, just for fun I'll stop in at that building and see if old Whatshisname still has his office there. I thought it improbable, in a building with so many exits and a business with so many reasons for using them; but, anyhow, I hadn't been in that lobby for years and I suddenly had a hankering to breathe again its impure unserene. There I had once been very young and new planets had swum into my ken; contracts had been signed and all manner of excitement. A good deal of it had been as irritatingly absurd as Conrad found a London literary journal's reference to a "mizzen fore upper topsail," which is like referring to a horse's hind-front leg—and reminds me of the same excellent magazine's appeal to American subscribers to "pin a Seven Dollar Bill to this blank and send it to us." But in the afterward of time all had simmered into an affectionate ripeness; I even contemplated calling on the producer himself and asking him how were tricks.

The directory of a building like that is as excit-

ing as the index of a volume of short stories; in fact, that's just what it is; it often amazes me that O. Henry made no reference to those little anthologies of chance, which were so much in his "line." I delayed looking at the list of names until I had prowled a little in the lobby, verified my recollection of the various stairways—up to Monroe Clothes, down to Beauty and the Barber. The tingling atmosphere of comedy was still there, though it seemed to me that the building was less theatrical in its tenants and more moving picture. Together with an influx of moving pictures and realtors had come a strange plenty of trade journals on laundering—one of life's queer adjustments, I suppose. I think, feeling so tender toward that building, I shall give you some extracts from its directory. Among Midtown Development Corporations and Oil Burner Companies and Movie Producers I found

The Laundry Age
 The Selhose Sales Corporation
 Russian Balalaika Orchestra
 World Dancers Association
 Primrose Realty Corporation
 Tagore Realty Corporation
 Starchroom Laundry Journal
 Shoe Rebuilders for America
 Physicians' Research Bureau

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N. Y. Horological Laboratory
Del Franco Grape Company
Mitsuboshi Porcelain Laboratory
Mountain Oil and Refining Co.
Harper Method Scalp Treatment
Graingrowers' Guide
Dentinol and Pyorrhocide Co.
Credit Opinion, Inc.
Amelia Hair Co.
Broadway Sightseeing Co.
Ebor Realty Co.

The Ebor gave me an agreeable start. How come that little classic echo? It was as pleasant as finding the Primrose Realty on the river's brim of the Great White Way. The Shoe Rebuilders for America comes a little too close to the familiar stories of trouping to be comforting to any unlucky actor who studies the list. But I am leading up to my grand climax. It sprang out at me among those queerly assorted names. It proves to me that life in New York is just as much an adventure as it was—well, seven years ago. This was the entry I saw:

Elephants, Inc.

So that had to be my compensation, my treasure trove. I went away, hugging Elephants, Inc., to my breast. For, of course, my producer wasn't there. His name was not in the directory.

THE STUPID MAGICIAN

THERE was once a Stupid Magician, who spent all his evenings in a room where he fussed about with his own kind of magic. And in the room overhead there slept three little girls.

These three little girls went to bed at half hour intervals, each taking into bed with her a large and quite heavy doll. So a little later, when they turned over in their sleep—also at half hour intervals, for they were children well regulated in their habits—the dolls would fall out thump! on the floor. The magician would hear them and smile gently to himself. He counted on hearing those three customary thumps. The first doll always fell out about half past eight, the second about nine, the third at half past nine. After that, unless the dogs in that neighbourhood found something to be scandalized about, there was Silence.

I call him a magician with some hesitation, for he dealt in a very humble sort of legerdemain. You mustn't imagine he was clever or important; he was merely a sorcerer in a small way, a clumsy

THE STUPID MAGICIAN

and stupid one. Yet he had his Moments, as I like to believe we all have; flashes of fortune when he was pleased with his affair and when some modest job of enchantment had come off well. And of course I don't need to tell you that there were parentheses when he was lonely and grim. It is only people with a little sprinkle of despair in them who take up magic as a trade.

His particular kind of magic required, for its perfection, a certain amount of Silence—a thing, in that land and time, more and more difficult to get. In fact it looked sometimes as though there were going to be a shortage of it. Some magicians maintained that it had all been bought up by the Telephone Company, or destroyed by dogs. At any rate there hardly seemed enough of it to go round.

During the day, when Silence was scarce, this magician went about collecting fragments of raw magic. This was not theft, because the magic was all quite intangible and useless; often it only existed in his own mind. It was discarded odds and ends such as the look of tall buildings in a certain colour of morning, a leopard-skin jerkin (worn by strong men in vaudeville shows, leaving one shoulder bare) seen in a sporting-goods window, sudden beauties on a passing face or even inside a pair of stockings, the shininess of a motor car, or words overheard that seemed comic. Mostly he

got these things very cheap, though sometimes he came upon truth that cost him dear.

He used to take his raw material home, mix it with some Silence he kept there, stir it about in a private receptacle, and presently it came out on bits of paper. Then people said it was magic.

I don't know that he intended it to be magic, it merely began as his way of having a good time; but some cheerful bystanders said it was, he liked the idea and did nothing to discourage it. At any rate there must have been some deviltry about it because people who saw his work were so differently affected. Some said it was too dull, others too bright; some said it's too jocular, others it's too sad. Some said it's not magic at all, just foolishness. And, illogically I suppose, he was most disappointed by those who said nothing whatever.

Sometimes this stupid magician met others of his craft. For there are places where these sorcerers get together, and grumble or laugh outrageously. No one knows just how they find one another out, but they do; I think myself that they have evil ways of recognition when they meet, by unseemly things they say or deplorable habits of disregarding matters that you and I know are important. They gather, and console themselves in their own way, compare notes on each other's incantations and think up new tricks. It is well that they keep to themselves, for their

remarks on these occasions would probably be annoying to honest folk.

And then a disconcerting thing happened. The stupid magician found his magic was changing. Spells he had used before no longer interested him; he wasted his precious time working away at new kinds of abracadabra and sorcery. Some of his clients were displeased. They said they had liked the old sort of thing well enough, why worry them by juggling with new colours and rituals? It's very little use, they said, working up illusions that people around you won't care for. If that's your idea of magic, keep it to yourself. But in spite of their apparent eagerness to please, magicians are obstinate in their hearts; if you want them to work enchantment for you you'll have to let them do it as they please.

Suddenly the magician realized that it was midnight, and he'd been so busy with his infernal broodings that he hadn't heard the dolls fall out. He had missed the three little thumps that meant so much to him. He tiptoed upstairs to see if all was well; yes, there were the dolls, each sprawled on the floor as usual.

And the magician realized that some day, when we all turn over in our sleep—to sleep more soundly still—the toys that consoled us will fall out on the floor and be forgotten. So we had better do our magic now, however we can.

ESSAYS

The Stupid Magician thereupon said his prayers, or what he called his prayers, and went to bed.

It's unfortunate, this doesn't seem to suggest any moral. Fairy tales are usually supposed to, aren't they? Though I don't know why; life, the greatest fairy tale of all, doesn't seem to have any.

THE END

